COACH MART

The weekly for the coach industry | Issue 670 | December 19th 1991

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Freeman's £10 million boost for buses

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1983 B10M Jonckh SOLD 48 seats, 6 speed gearbox, curtains, nks machine, MoT 29.11.91. Stock No.

1983 Volvo B10M 12 metre, 57 seater, Duple Laser, PA/radio/cassette, 6 speed ZF manual gearbox, MoT 15.07.92. Stock No. 1074.

1980 B58 Air/Leaf Dominant, 12 metre, 53 seats, 48 recliners, 5 fixed, automat g/b, power door, tinted windows, curtains, side lockers, new MoT. Stock No. 0012.

1973 B58 Plaxton Supreme, 11 metre, 53 (remoquetted) seats, X'Press doors, side lockers. Stock No. 1047.

BEDFORD

1975 YRQ Plaxton, 45 seats, power door, side lockers, private plates, Stock No. 1062.

LEYLAND

1982 Duple Dominant, 51 reclining seats, 6 spd gearbox, side lockers, MoT 21.01.92. Stock No. 9033.

1980 Leopard Plaxton Supreme, 11 metre, 53 (remoquetted) seats, X'Press doors, 6 speed ZF gearbox, side lockers, MoT Oct '92. Stock No. 9009.

SCANIA

1986 K112 Plaxton 3500, 55 reclining seats, demountable toilet, double glazed, retarder, curtains, radio/PA/cassette, MoT 01.03.92. Stock Number 1063.

CUMMINS

1985 Duple 425 (Cummins), 6 speed automatic g/box. 54 recliners, curtains, radio/PA, toilet, drinks machine, TV monitors, continental door, courier seat. Stock No. 1070.

SETRA

1987 S215 HR (Rational) Mercedes, V8 engine, 6 speed ZF gearbox, Voith retarder, 47 recliners, toilet, drinks, fridge, TV, Webasto, curtains, MoT 9.6.92. Stock No. 1072.

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M.O.T. APRIL 1992

DAF 1986 DKFL PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500 12M,49/53 recliners, red/grey moquette, demountable rear sunken toilet, continental exit door, courier seat, curtains, power entrance door, wired for T.V./video, cream/duo blue.
M.O.T. FEBRUARY 1992

VOLVO 1984 (AUG) B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500 12M,49 recliners, beige/red moquette, rear sunken toilet/continental door, driver's berth, courier seat, Webasto heating, TELMA retarder, drinks machine, curtains, tinted double glazing, power entrance door, wired and boxed for T.V./video, silver/blue.
M.O.T. JULY 1992

VOLVO 1983 (AUG) B10M BERKHOF ESPRITE HIGH-LINE 12M,49/53 recliners, autumn moquette, demountable toilet, continental door. TELMA retarder, cream.
M.O.T. FEBRUARY 1992

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M.O.T. OCTOBER 1992

BOVA 1988 FUTURA FHD 12.290 INTEGRAL 12M,49/53 recliners duo red moquette, centre sunken demountable toilet + continental entrance/exit door, courier seat, double glazed side windows, power entrance door, drinks machine, duo brown/orange.
M.O.T. MARCH 1992

VOLVO 1986 (AUG) B10M DUPLE DOMINANT 12,55 str., + 23 standees SERVICE SALOON, fully-automatic gearbox with integral retarder, red/orange moquette, blue/cream. CHOICE OF TWO.
M.O.T. AUGUST 1992

DENNIS 1986 LANCET VAN HOOL ALIZEE-H,35 recliners grey/red/orange moquette, tinted side windows + curtains, TELMA retarder, grey/red.
M.O.T. AUGUST 1992

BOVA 1985 FUTURA FHD 12.280 INTEGRAL 12M,49 str., red moquette (44 recliners + 5 rear fixed) centre sunken toilet, continental door, driver's berth, drinks machine, fridge, Webasto, power entrance door, double glazing, courier seat, curtains, wired for T.V./video, twin fuel tanks, white/red.
M.O.T. JULY 1992

VOLVO 1986 (AUG) B10MT (TANDEM) VAN HOOL ALIZEE-SH 12M,49 recliners, grey/red moquette, rear toilet, driver's berth, courier seat, curtains, fridge, drinks machine, wired for T.V./video, all white.
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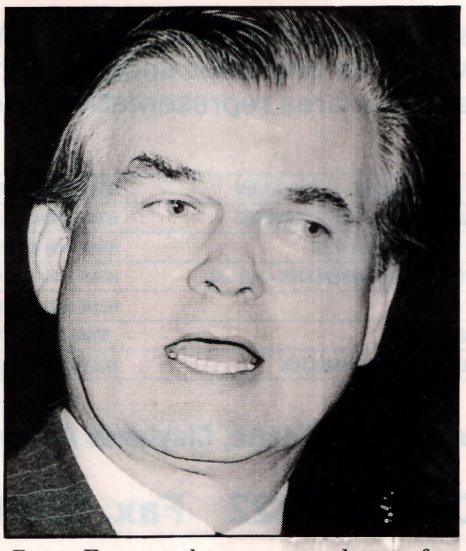

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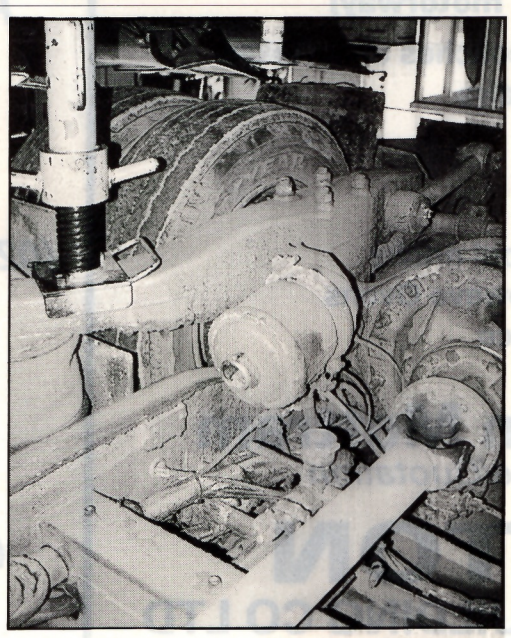

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COMMENT

ROGER Freeman's timely seasonal gesture comes as a welcome boost to an ailing industry, but many hardened campaigners will be left wondering what's in it for them.

Put into the context of total Government support for buses (£673 million last year), this extra £10 million is a drop in the ocean. Only three years ago £20 million was put aside for the now abandoned rural bus grant.

There is no disguising the constant fall in bus passenger numbers despite the extra services generated by deregulation. Bus priority schemes are rightly seen as a significant contribution to rectifying the trend. But is £10 million enough?

The money will fund 10 schemes over two years. The BCC put forward 17 schemes and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities is asking for £20 million.

Bus priorities must be seen to work AND coaches must be allowed equal access. More money must come forward - particularly after the General Election - and more passengers must be wooed from the comfort of their cars. Only then will operators, small or large, benefit from extra revenue through the farebox.

How much extra business and the exact effect on new vehicle orders remains to be seen, but the timing of the grant is ironic. In the morning we hear that the Government is backing the bus, yet a few hours later the EC is threatening the coach with a new imposed speed limit.

Speed limits are an emotive issue bound up with the sensitive debate about safety. True, some private parties prefer to travel at sedate speeds and a few operators instruct their drivers to keep speed below the legal limit in the interests of passenger comfort. However, this is personal choice. A cut to 62 mph on motorways threatens to undermine the key advantages offered by coach travel.

Every coach business will be affected. Express, extended tours, excursions and private hire all will be slower and therefore more expensive, less attractive and potentially more dangerous as coaches are condemned to share motorway space with HGVs.

Coach operators have struggled through the most difficult year on record. They have manfully kept their businesses afloat and, unlike bus services, encouraged more people to travel with them. This success is thrown into the European melting pot.

If operators stand up now we can make speed limits a constitutional issue. Surely the British Government still has some power to decide what is good for its own citizens.

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■LEGISLATION

EC Directive will force UK coaches to 'slow down'

MOTORWAY speed limits for full-size coaches will be cut to 100 kph (62 mph) after January 1994.

The law is outlined in a new EC Directive issued this week from Brussels, which confirms operators' worst fears that a pan-European speed limit would be imposed (*Coachmart,* December 12). The Bus & Coach Council, which has consistently spoken out against a 100 kph speed limit for coaches, said it was 'absolutely horrified' that Brussels had passed the Directive.

'The EC has ignored the economic and social effects this will have in Britain,' said BCC's director of public affairs, David Watson. 'Operators and their staff, manufacturers and the public will all be the losers.'

BCC is asking its members to write to their MPs to put pressure on the Government to seek a derogation (exemption) from the Directive.

The Directive will harmonise the use of speed limiters to govern all coaches over 10 tonnes or with more than eight seats to a maximum of 62 mph. BCC and the UK Government believe speed limits should be a matter for individual nations to decide.

As plans for the Directive came to the surface in recent weeks, more and more operators have expressed grave reservations about the effect it would have on the UK coach industry. Both long distance tours and express coach services would be under threat.

National Express: warns motorway services would be put at risk.

Shearings and Wallace Arnold said it would cost them £1 million a year in extra driver salaries alone.

National Express chairman and managing director, Ray McEnhill, warned that long distance motorway services unique to Britain would be put at risk because of the extra costs incurred by slower schedules.

Ultimately it would be the passenger that suffered: 'The lower speed limit in France and Germany is geared to a society where it is an overt government policy to direct the passenger onto the railways. This is in complete contrast to the British Government's stance on encouraging choice and competition and it would be ironic if the effect of so damaging a restriction on long distance coach services would be to eliminate customer choice.'

Operators also fear a 62 mph speed limit would effectively eliminate them from the third lane of motorways, slowing them down further and compromising safety.

Enlist MPs' support to fight proposals

THE only way to prevent the introduction of the reduced speed limit in this country is to act now! *Coachmart* - along with the BCC - urges all operators to lobby their Member of Parliament who has the power to reject the EC Directive. Write to him, or her, and make it known what dire consequences would be heaped on your business if they allowed the legislation to go through. *Coachmart* has drafted an open letter to MPs - use it to save the coaching industry.

'Dear Member of Parliament,

An EC directive to reduce motorway speed limits from 70 mph to 62 mph threatens the coach industry as we know it in Britain today and we need your help to overturn this dictact from Brussels.

Estimates by two major operators who have about 600 coaches between them indicate an immediate increase of more than £1 million a year to them alone - a cost which will be magnified throughout the industry.

National Express, the largest operator of express services, says that large sections of its network would have to be abandoned and others seriously curtailed.

An immediate cost of £2 million would be needed to modify vehicles, re-schedule, re-timetable and market the revised services.

The effects on the high-user groups - students and the elderly - would be disastrous.

Reducing speed limits would also effectively remove much of the competition provided by the coach with the railway.

In the run up to the privatisation of BR it would be handing them a large amount of business and transferring other passengers to the very vehicles we are keen to get them out of - the car.

Away from the crippling financial effect it will have on coaching, let's look at some of the so-called benefits that Brussels sees in such a switch:

***CLAIM:** There will be reduced fuel consumption.*

***FACT:** It will increase because more coaches will have to be put into service to keep service levels as they are. Coaches will have to move more frequently between the second and third lanes when overtaking. They will have to brake and accelerate more - using more fuel.*

If a substantial amount of passengers transfer to rail, more trains will be needed and this will increase fuel use as rail transport is a much less efficient user of fuel than diesel-engined coaches.

***CLAIM:** There will be less pollution.*

***FACT:** Reducing top speeds to 100 kph will have virtually no effect because British coach engines have been developed to run efficiently at the present limit.*

***CLAIM:** Reducing coach speeds will reduce coach accidents.*

***FACT:** Coaches are the safest means of surface transport. Of 5,217 fatal accidents in 1990, just 16 involved buses and coaches.*

So when you meet in the House of Commons to vote on the latest decision by the EC's Council of Ministers, we urge you to consider the dire consequences for our industry and reject the legislation.'

BRIEFS

● **CHESTERFIELD Transport has ordered seven Mercedes-Benz 811D midibuses with Alexander AM type 33-seat bodies.**

The vehicles, which will join nine smaller Alexander-bodied Mercs, will be delivered in April next year.

● LONSDALE Coaches, of Morecambe, Lancs, is teaming up with its local university football team.

It has agreed to sponsor Lancaster University's Lonsdale College soccer side.

The team, which uses Lonsdale Coaches to travel to matches, will be kitted out in shirts with the company logo on them.

● **GARY Webster, who plays Arthur Daley's sidekick Ray in the 'Minder' TV series, has launched a major initiative by lager maker, Fosters Draught, which will provide free public transport for Londoners on New Year's Eve.**

Thanks to Fosters, revellers will be able to travel home free on London's buses, Docklands Light Railway and the Underground.

● BUS drivers from Brighton & Hove Bus and Coach Company have agreed to impose a voluntary speed limit of 20 mph for the sake of shoppers. The move follows the introduction of traffic restrictions on one of the town's busiest streets and which frees the road for buses.

● **EAST Lancs Coachbuilders says it has converted enquiries made at October's Coach & Bus '91 show into firm orders for a total of 70 new double and single deck bus bodies.**

Companies which have placed firm orders include Northampton Transport, Kentish Bus, Grey-Green, Southampton Citybus Hyndburn Transport and East Yorkshire Motor Services.

■BUS

Freeman pledges £10 million boost for bus schemes...

ROGER Freeman, Minister of Public Transport, has at last responded to pressure from the bus and coach industry and announced that at least £10 million will be made available over the next two years to fund specific local authority bus schemes.

He has unveiled a package of measures agreed by a working group - set up under his chairmanship earlier this year - to promote the use of the bus and relieve congestion which is choking Britain's towns and cities.

The Department of Transport has also published a document - *'Keeping Buses Moving'* - which is a guide for local authorities on the provision of bus priority measures.

It has also pledged that it will provide more resources to the traffic commissioners to check that local buses run to their published timetables.

Other measures include: a review of current arrangements for passenger information with a view to providing guidelines for local authorities and bus operators; the department will seek to fund a local authority demonstration project which utilises fully accessible low-floor buses; and the introduction in 1992 of smoke emission tests for buses and tough roadside enforcement.

Roger Freeman: promising action to relieve congestion.

Mr Freeman said: 'Greater use of the bus by the travelling public is essential as a means for easing urban congestion.

'I have identified four areas in which these measures will help to achieve this.

'Buses need to move quickly through traffic and that is why we have decided to fund over the next two years a number of bus priority schemes.

'These will include such measures as bus lanes, park and ride schemes, and priority traffic lights.

'Buses need to provide an efficient service and that is why we will be providing extra resources for the traffic commissioners to check that operators provide their registered service.

'We also intend to issue guidelines on the preparation and co-ordination of passenger information.

'I want to see greater accessibility to buses by the progressive incorporation of DiPTAC standards into current UK vehicles and greater use of low-floor buses.

'And finally, the introduction of smoke emission tests and firm policing of emission levels from buses and coaches will ensure well-tuned and less polluting vehicles.'

The working group to promote bus use was made up of representatives from the Bus & Coach Council, the local authority associations, the Public Transport Executive, bus and coach manufacturers, the police and the National Federation of Bus Users.

... as Prescott outlines Labour's stance

LABOUR will launch bus franchising networks, cut out competition and 'guarantee' the purchase of new vehicles if elected at the General Election, says Shadow Transport Secretary, John Prescott.

Its latest policy document, *London: A Strategy For Transport,* fails to say how the system will work. A decision has to wait until Labour is in power, but independent TV-type bidding could replace the present tendering process.

Franchising of large networks would favour large operators - leaving the small companies to pick-up sub-contracted routes and unable to run competitive services. The report claims that the quality of service is more important than who operates them.

The Opposition slams the record of privatisation. Although the current system of single route tendering by London Transport is seen as less damaging, the report says: 'There are too many cases of drivers forced to work longer hours for less money - and even alleged cases of breaches of the law by contravening drivers' hours regulation.'

Labour believes fragmentation of the network and passenger inconvenience will increase once all routes are put out to tender. The new proposals aim to preserve a transport network which, in the capital, must be looked at alongside Underground and British Rail services.

A new elected Greater London Authority would introduce the franchising proposal as part of 'a return to the strategic planning it so desperately needs.'

Mr Prescott said: 'Labour's policies offer a new dawn for London's transport. The Government response is incoherent and hopelessly inadequate. Privatisation will make things worse, yet they plan to privatise London Buses, Network South East and the Docklands Light Railway.

'Privatisation will lead to opportunism, not revival. London will sink further down the European city league table.'

■BUS

Industry reaction to Government announcement

Graham Smith: 'satisfying to receive financial commitment.'

Trevor Smallwood: 'looking forward to more detail.'

Neil Beresford: 'will help give buses a higher profile.'

BCC welcomes cash injection

THE Bus & Coach Council warmly welcomed Roger Freeman's £10 million injection of funds for bus priority schemes. A spokesman described the announcement as 'wonderful'.

With this new money, which will be spent on specific trial projects over two years, and existing separate London schemes, the BCC says that it's not just passengers and operators that will benefit. But it should give manufacturers a timely boost.

The BCC believes that the Government is now taking seriously the industry's case in favour of the bus.

BCC president, Graham Smith, said: 'It is increasingly recognised that the bus offers one of the most effective solutions to urban traffic problems. Our operators are not looking for handouts but an effective level of infrastructure which gives the bus the priority it deserves.

'The fact that the money will be ring fenced for specific bus priority measures and part of a continuing commitment is evidence of the Government's solid support.'

The 'Buses Mean Business' campaign was launched by the BCC in November last year. It outlined schemes to improve bus speeds and encourage people to leave the car at home. A working party, which was chaired by the Minister, has evaluated these proposals.

'Since we launched the 'Buses Mean Business' initiative, we have had very positive responses from local and central government. Just 12 months later, it is very satisfying to have received a firm financial commitment from the Minister,' added Mr Smith.

Leading UK bus operators have welcomed the news. Trevor Smallwood, Badgerline managing director and BCC representative on the Department of Transport's bus working party, said: 'It's nice to see that central government recognises the role of the bus. We are looking forward to the detail, but must take heart from what has already been said.'

Bill Cottham, chairman and managing director of Yorkshire Rider, said: 'It recognises the vital role of the bus and makes additional resources available.' Yorkshire Rider has submitted several projects for consideration.

Plans fall short of BCC initiative

PLAXTON Coach & Bus has welcomed Roger Freeman's measures to promote bus useage.

Neil Beresford, managing director of Plaxton's manufacturing companies, said: 'For some time we have been talking directly to the Government to paint them a graphic picture of the real difficulties faced by customers and hence by manufacturers.

'The announcement of £10 million towards bus priority measures and tighter emission controls will help achieve a higher profile for the bus and upgrade its image in the public eye which in turn must benefit the industry.'

However, he added: 'Sadly it does not approach the full amount of support called for by the proposals in the 'Buses Mean Business' initiative which could have provided a kick start to a recovery in the bus and coach business. But Mr Freeman's positive advocation of the bus as a viable means of transport must be welcomed.'

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders was guarded in its response and repeated its call that all buses of more than 15 years old should be removed from public service and operators paid a 'scrappage' grant.

A spokesman said a national scheme was needed to stimulate investment in clean, fuel efficient vehicles.'

■ BRIEFS

●FOLLOWING the decision by British Rail not to operate any trains on Boxing Day, National Express and sister company, Speedlink Airport Services, will be operating special airport coach services.

The services will link London with Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted airports.

● THE Changing of the Guard in London has changed its days.

During January the spectacle will be seen on odd dates. In February it will be on even and in March it reverts back to odd dates.

● HOLIDAY Club, Pontins, has said it has no dealings or agreement whatever with Atlas International *(Coachmart,* November 28) as was claimed by the company.

'We will be offering self-drive and coach holidays for the trade to EuroDisney,' said group and tours manager, Harold Burke.

'But the coach contracting is being done entirely by ourselves. If Atlas is recruiting for EuroDisney it must be for another holiday company.'

● OPERATORS looking for special group rates at the Earl's Court Motor Racing Show in February should contact the organisers, 3D Events.

The show runs for three days from February 7, and the organisers can be contacted on 081 892 9252.

● A NEW London Transport express bus route - the D11 - has been launched by Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department of Transport, Patrick McLoughlin MP.

The service provides a link between London Bridge Station and Canary Wharf and is being operated by East London Bus & Coach Company.

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1989 (G) LAG PANORAMIC. 49 reclining seats, courier seat, centre toilet, cont door and steps, double glazed, curtains, bunk, 1 screen video, water boiler, fridge, Telma, radio, PA, tape, additional fuel tank, alarm. Finished in blue.

1988 (E) DAF SB2305 DHS CAETANO ALGARVE. 49/53 seats, demountable toilet, 2 x TV, video, hot water boiler, courier seat, driver's bunk, carpets and curtains.

1988 (F) VOLVO B10M CAETANO ALGARVE. 49/53 seats, centre toilet, TV/video, courier seat, double glazing and curtains.

1987 (D) SCANIA K112/PLAXTON 3500. Telma retarder, 51/55 demountable, centre toilet, video system, water boiler, double glazed with curtains, steps and Cont. door.

1986 (C) LAG PANORAMIC INTEGRAL KITCHEN COACH, 46 reclining seats, with rear servery, full air conditioning, centre toilet, continental step, water boiler, fridge plus usual executive features.

1985 (C) DAF MB 230 LAG GALAXY. High floor, 49/53 demountable, sunken rear toilet, TV & video, boiler, bunk, double glazed, Webasto, carpets & curtains, retrimmed throughout in brown. Finished in white.

1983 (PP) VOLVO B10M JONCKHEERE P50 EXEC, Telma, 49 seats, rear sunken toilet & cont door, TV/video, coffee machine, cool box, bunk, Webasto, cellular telephone.

1983 (Y) BEDFORD YMPS PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200, 32 fixed seats, tinted double glazing, radio PA & tape, power door, side lockers.

1980 (V) DAF PLAXTON SUPREME 4. 57 seater, radio, PA, tape, side lockers, power door.

1976 (P) LEYLAND LEOPARD/DUPLE DOMINANT. 51 seats, semi-auto, power door.

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■LEGISLATION

Neoplan seeks EC support for 15-metre coaches

NEOPLAN, the German coach manufacturer, is seeking EC approval to operate 15-metre coaches in Europe.

It sees a new role for its Super Skyliners equipped to four star standard with 85 seats for top class touring, and, at two star standard, with 120 seats for express and private hire.

Four-axle Super Skyliners have improved steer axles and rear steer which gives the giant coach a 25-metre diameter turning circle (UK regulations stipulate a 24-metre maximum turning circle).

Overall length is three metres less than the legally admissable length for articulated vehicles.

After selling 50 units to Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Libya, Peru, Saudi Arabia, Sweden and the USA, Neoplan is intent on selling its Super Skyliner in European markets.

In addition to Sweden, Turkey has also now approved legislation of 15-metre long PSVs.

As a first move to wider acceptance, Neoplan is making separate applications for 'exceptional approvals' to EC member countries transport ministries.

In the UK, this exercise is being co-ordinated by sole Neoplan dealer, Carlton PSV.

Roger Dixon, Carlton PSV managing director, said: 'Neoplan is understandably anxious to achieve dispensation, or change of regulations. It sees the holiday markets in Germany, Scandinavia, France and Benelux countries as the best initial opportunities, but it also includes the UK as a contender in the express field.'

Neoplan: looking to operate 15-metre coaches in Europe.

He said the 15-metre model conforms closely to current legislation in Europe, and he recalled the universal rebuttal of the 12-metre Skyliner when it was introduced 25 years ago.

■SALES

Dublin Bus orders 40 Plaxton Verdes

DUBLIN Bus has ordered 40 Plaxton Verde single deck bodies on DAF SB220 chassis.

This is the first major order for the Verde, which can be fitted on DAF chassis because Dublin is outside the UK.

Inside the UK, DAF chassis can only be supplied as complete vehicles by fellow United Bus subsidiary, Optare.

The SB220s ordered by Dublin Bus have been specified with long front overhang (263 mm) and two fuel tanks.

Supplied from May 1992, they will be the first SB220s in Ireland.

Bus Eireann, also part of the state-owned Irish operator CIE, has ordered a further 20 MB230 coach chassis from DAF.

The new coaches will be supplied with Plaxton Paramount bodies in spring next year.

Plaxton says it has taken orders worth over £5 million during the last few weeks.

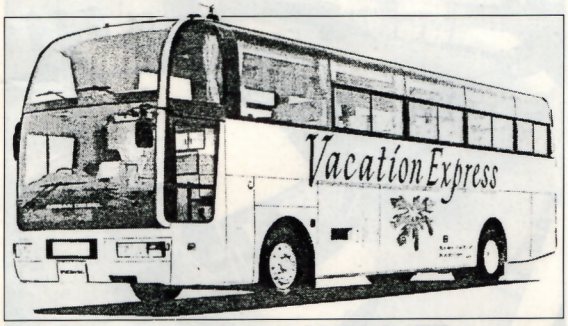
All 60 DAFs for Dublin Bus and Bus Eireann are to be Plaxton-bodied.

CIE is also to take a further six stock Paramounts on Leyland Tiger chassis.

Orders from Shearings, Tappins, Dodsworth, Anderson, Harry Shaw and Perry's of Slingsby bring the number of Premieres and Excaliburs ordered to nearly 200.

■NEW COACH

Nissan brings out new model



The Space Wing: not available in the UK.

NISSAN launched an innovative high-floor coach at the Tokyo Motor Show called the Space Wing.

Although built in right-hand drive form, there are no plans to sell the touring coach in the UK.

Driver and entrance area are separated from the passenger saloon in a design that would not look out of place in any European coach fleet.

Safety features are high on the specification sheet with ABS (anti-lock braking) and ASR (anti-slip) as standard. Closed circuit television is fitted to help the driver when reversing.

A novel device not seen on any coach built in Europe is an electronic eye that spots obstructions at the front of the vehicle and slows it down.

■PEOPLE

John Armstrong retires

ONE of the North-East's best-known faces, John Armstrong, of Armstrongs of Ebchester, has retired after 41 years' service with the same company.

When John (65) started in 1950 as a driver, he was at the wheel of Leyland PS1s and an Albion with a Scottish Aviation body which went 28 mph flat out.

'Things have changed since then,' John told *Coachmart*. 'I believe it was a better job then, and the firms had a real family atmosphere.

'It's not all bad, though. I've seen Armstrongs move all the way up to running continental tours, and made a lot of friends. PSVs are in my blood.'

Armstrongs was one of the first operators to run express services from Newcastle to London, using Majestics which were once a familiar sight on the Great North Road.

John will devote his spare time to gardening, dominoes, and has promised himself a football match or two: 'I love football but I've always been working on Saturdays,' he said.

■FIXTURES

Rifkind is star guest

MALCOLM Rifkind, Secretary of State for Transport, is guest of honour at the BCC's annual dinner.

The 1992 dinner will be held on February 5 at The New Connaught Rooms, Great Queen Street, London.

Admission is reserved for *bonafide* members of the BCC who will be charged £38.

Write to: Annual Dinner, Public Affairs Department, Bus & Coach Council, Sardinia House, 52 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, WC2A 3LA.

■EXPRESS SERVICES

Acorn's overseas' services grow

Czechoslovakian express starts today

A BRISTOL-based tour and coach operator is running a regular, licensed express coach service from the UK to Czechoslovakia.

Acorn International, owned by Nigel Barry and Polish-born Serge Raychell, has hired-in coaches from Bedfordshire-based Anglia International to run the service.

Starting today, an Anglia coach leaves Victoria every fortnight. Next April it is scheduled to run every week.

The 24-hour, non-stop journey to the centre of Prague costs £45 single and £85 return.

It is in effect a four-day operation and requires two drivers.

Set up last year, Acorn specialises in running tours to Poland using hired-in vehicles.

The company also organises incoming tours from Poland, where it has offices in Warsaw and Krakow.

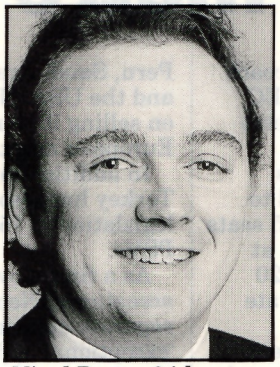
Next year it plans to run coach tours to Russia and Lithuania.

'More than ever, people in the West want to get to know Eastern Europe,' said Nigel Barry.

'We convey 20,000 Polish people to and from Poland each year and now we are about to bridge an even wider gap between East and West.

'The number of Czechoslovakians living in this country is about a quarter of the Polish population. However, the possibilities for UK residents are endless - holidaymaking, cultural and school exchanges, or simply getting to know Czechoslovakia.

'And Czechoslovakians coming to learn English will also benefit.'



Nigel Barry: 24-hour journey to Prague costs £45 single and £85 return.

Acorn has obtained licences from both the British Department of Transport and the Czech equivalent to run its new services. National Express-owned Eurolines is the major licensed operator of express routes to European cities, but other operators are actively looking at the market in the run-up to a single European market.

Coach Europe, now owned by County Travel's Paul Cresswell, has obtained valid licences for Prague, Budapest and Warsaw.

It intends to run services using hired-in vehicles next year.

■EXPRESS SERVICES

Stagecoach looks to run rail services

STAGECOACH could be running express services on British Rail trains if forthcoming talks with BR are successful.

Brian Souter, Stagecoach chairman, has unveiled plans to run train services competing directly with InterCity. He has already held talks with Secretary of State for Transport, Malcolm Rifkind, which he described as 'very positive.' And a meeting has now been arranged this week with BR chief executive, John Welsby, to discuss a range of plans that could take Britain's biggest bus company into the business of running trains.

Mr Souter said that phase one of the plan was for a Scotland to London service. Stagecoach would hire a complete train from BR, with driver, and put its own staff on board. Passengers would be bussed to mainline stations in Scotland for the train journey to London.

Phase two would involve Stagecoach operating its own trains and crews on the existing BR network. The third and final phase would be Stagecoach buying an entire sector of the rail network if, or when, BR is privatised.

Stagecoach, which now runs 2,400 vehicles in the UK, sold its Scotland to London express coach services to arch rival, National Express, in 1989. The deal followed fierce rivalry between the two giant operators, with fares cut to the bone in the battle for passengers.

■MANUFACTURING

Manufacturing first for Car Chair

CAR CHAIR, the Sussex-based conversion company, is building its first coachbuilt bodywork following the purchase of Robin Hood's moulds.

Managing director, David Constable, confirmed the first order for eight from Solent Blueline, of Southampton. He said: 'Although we've restyled the front a little bit, the bodywork is essentially the same as the Robin Hood design.'

The Blueline vehicles are 23-seaters on long-wheelbase Iveco 49.10 for delivery in February. They are being built by Car Chair's new specialist vehicle division in the recently-acquired factory in Hailsham.

Car Chair: doubled its manufacturing capacity and increased sales by 25 percent.

Robin Hood, who once headed his own vehicle building company, has been taken on to push PSV sales *(Coachmart,* December 5, 1991).

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or lease from £56 per week

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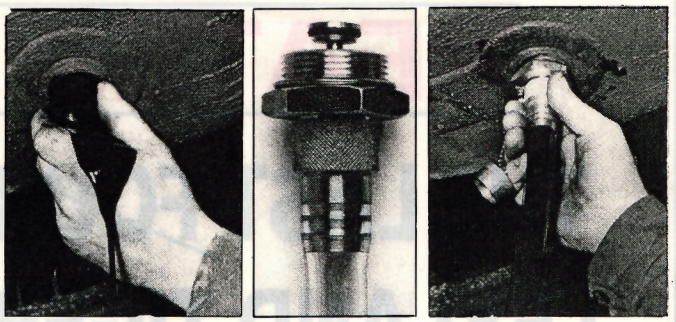

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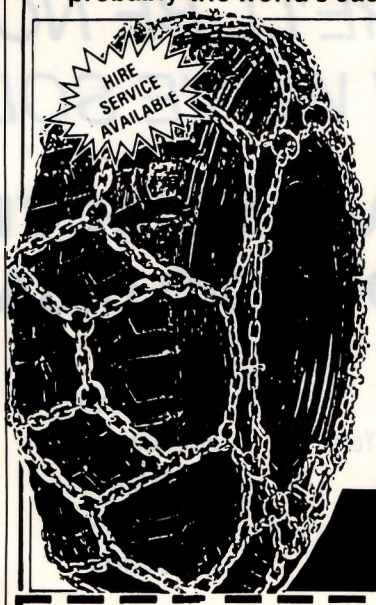

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Survey says driving can damage your health

Features editor, Mike Morgan, reports on a major initiative to improve the coach driver's working environment.

A NEW survey from the Transport and General Workers Union backs claims that poor cab design puts PSV drivers' health at risk.

Major areas of concern are exposed - seating, ventilation, heating, assault screens and cab layout.

The TGWU says additional ill-health features which present themselves include arthritis, cervical spondylosis, 'left-leg' syndrome, and driver's neck.

The union is urging operators and manufacturers to give cab design a major rethink.

Vehicle manufacturers, designers, trade associations, technical institutes and medical specialists came together in a 'Round Table Conference on Vehicle Design and the Transport Worker'.

The initiative followed a survey by the TGWU of the problems faced by its driver members caused by poor design.

TGWU national secretary for passenger services Graham Stevenson, who convened the conference, said: 'We are delighted with the results so far of our Round Table approach.

'There was great agreement among all the specialists that action is needed to improve vehicle design from the point of view of the professional driver. The conference agreed to set up a study group to produce good voluntary standards.'

Driving: Transport and General Workers Union is urging manufacturers to re-think cab design.

Study group set up to produce good voluntary standards.

Mr Stevenson explained: 'We're not trying to re-invent the wheel, but it is clear from our survey of drivers that the working space above the wheels has never really been designed at all.

'In effect, the driver has been slotted into the space that is left when all the other needs of the vehicle have been designed.

'We're not blaming anybody for that, it is just the way that vehicles have evolved. But it clearly has major implications for the health and safety of drivers, as well as the safe use of the vehicles themselves. By bringing together manufacturers and technical experts with the first-line consumers of their products, I think we have really started something.

'There is considerable enthusiasm on all sides for the Round Table project, and great interest in the views expressed in our survey by our professional driver members. I am confident that together we can shape a better future for motor vehicles and all those who use them.'

Iveco, Dennis, Northern Counties, Ikarus and Scania were among those present to hear a catalogue of complaints on a wide range of vehicles from Dennis Dominator double-deckers to Iveco Ford minibuses.

The TGWU reported that the International Transport Workers' Federation, to which it is affiliated, is looking into bus design and it is due to visit Linkoping, Sweden, to look at research work which led to Sweden's standard for bus drivers' cabs.

An open invitation exists for any individual or group who wish to contribute to the TGWU's study.

Readers interested should contact Graham Stevenson at Transport House, Smith Square, London. Tel: 071 828 7788.

General problems

- **All vehicles are too hot in the summer and many vehicles are cold in deep mid-winter.**
- **PSV drivers' seats lack back support and seat coverings should be anti-sweat and anti-itch. One Essex driver had five weeks off work following a collapsed seat.**
- **Rainwater pours into the cab area.**
- **Glare of lights at night.**
- **Poor mirror positioning and adjustment - particularly on the nearside.**
- **Bending and stretching to reach controls.**
- **Ineffective demisters.**
- **Brake systems that grind with great vibration and noise.**

Recommendations

- **Air-conditioning should be standard.**
- **Video and radio wiring should be installed at the manufacturing stage.**
- **Steps should be built with the elderly and young in mind.**
- **Shock-absorbing drivers' seats with a wider range of adjustment are needed.**
- **Cab areas need to be less claustrophobic.**
- **Ventilation must be improved - particularly on minibuses.**
- **Braking-induced automatic downward gear changes should be smoother.**
- **A strong box is required for security on local service work.**

You've been buying...You've been buying...You've been buying...You've been buying...

Warrior helps improve business

LOADINGS are up 10 percent since Bluebird Bus and Coach, of Moston, Manchester, put its 'new' Willowbrook Warrior on the road.

Partner, Mike Dunstan, explained the need for the rebodied Leyland Leopard.

He told *Coachmart* that passenger numbers on Bluebird's Langley to Manchester commercial service had outgrown the minibuses used to launch the route in 1988.

It now uses up to seven Leyland Leopards when the basic half-hour frequency is boosted to 10 minutes in the morning peak or 20 minutes in the evening rush-hour. Commercial operation is being extended to Sundays at the end of this month.

Mr Dunstan claims the Warrior has been well received by the travelling public.

He said: 'Although the regulars are accustomed to the Duple or Plaxton coach bodies used, the Warrior is easily recognised as a bus and has attracted extra passengers.'

The Leopard was previously a Willowbrook 003-bodied coach with Midland Red North. Bluebird had the confidence to rebody the vehicle after running it for 12 months and replacing the engine and gearbox. Keeping the original coach seats has given the bus an air of coach quality.

Bluebird has further expanded its fleet to 20 with a new Carlyle-bodied Iveco Dailybus - one of the last to escape from Carlyle before its Edgbaston works closed.

Mercedes go on duty in Stratford

SIX Wright-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811Ds are now in operation with Stratford Blue. Four have replaced conventional big buses on services in and around Stratford while two, which have been partly funded by the Rural Development Commission, have opened up new links in rural Warwickshire.

Stratford Blue is the main provider of bus services in the Stratford-upon-Avon area and the new Wright-bodied Mercedes are providing services between Stratford and Birmingham, Leamington and Evesham, as well as running on local services.

Built to Alusuisse designs using aluminium extrusions, the Wright bodies have 33 high-backed seats and room for nine standing passengers. Purmo skirt radiators are fitted and the bodies incorporate DiPTAC features. The squab of the first offside double-seat can be lifted up to provide luggage space.

Stratford Blue is associated with Western Travel subsidiary, Midland Red South. This latest order brings to 18 the number of Wright-bodied midibuses delivered to the operators this year.

More Scanias join London Buses' fleet

LONDON Buses' recent order for 40 Scania buses for delivery in the Spring of 1992 follows its order for 20 which recently went on the road in East London on the service that mirrors the controversial Docklands Light Railway.

The Scanias for the special railway service have Alexander single-door bodywork, whereas the new delivery, which is for the same LBL subsidiary, East London, will feature Northern Counties double deck two door bodywork.

All the bodies are built to comply with standards laid down by London Transport Schedule X (10) similar to the DiPTAC standard of the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee.

Responsibility towards the environment played a significant part in the choice of Scania N113DBs.

They feature Scania's low emission, low noise 11 litre 206 bhp engines.

The low noise is achieved through a fully sound encapsulated engine compartment.

Voith three-speed, fully automatic D863 gearboxes are fitted.

Operations and marketing director, Norman Cohen, told *Coachmart:* 'London Buses is keenly aware of the role it has to play with regard to helping make our capital as clean as possible.

'To that end we are fully committed to purchasing vehicles at the forefront of environmental technology.'

You've been buying...You've been buying...You've been buying...You've been buying...

Coach Stop's quality coaches

COACH STOP, of Leigh-on-Sea, the specialist high quality coach operator, has added four top-specification vehicles to its fleet.

The four, a new EOS (pictured far right) and three Panoramics, have been supplied by Van Hool UK.

The EOS is the first in the Coach Stop fleet. Its flagship coach is a 32-seat Panoramic executive which was purchased new in 1988.

Gail Hopes, owner of Coach Stop, says: 'Our experience with the Panoramic has been first class - so much so that we had no hesitation in adding three more to our fleet along with our first EOS.'

Coach Stop was founded six years ago and has established a reputation as a provider of high quality coaches. The entire fleet is air-conditioned and, to maintain high service standard, each coach has its own driver.

'Two of the vehicles joining our fleet are replacements and the other two are to cater for the steady growth in demand which we have been experiencing,' adds Gail Hopes.

'There is no doubt in my mind that our success has been down to the combination of high quality coaches and personal service.'

Coach Stop specialises in concert and theatre parties, but also runs its own holiday programme and a healthy corporate private hire business.

The company's EOS was ordered because of its comprehensive standard specification to which Coach Stop has added only air-conditioning and fold-down aircraft-style tables on the back of each seat.

The Coach Stop EOS has a 345 bhp DAF DKX engine and ZF manual gearbox.

Sweyne plumps for Van Hool

SWEYNE Coaches, of Swinefleet near Goole, has taken its first Van Hool-bodied coach.

Once again Sweyne has gone for a DAF rear engine chassis, but has broken with tradition by introducing the first Belgian built coach into the otherwise all-Plaxton fleet.

The coach was an exhibit at the recent BCC Coach & Bus show in Birmingham. It was brush painted in the traditional way by supplying dealer, Hughes DAF. Included in the signwriting is an outline of the Viking King Sweyne who lent his name to Swinefleet.

Partner, Eric Holt, explained that the name Sweyne was adopted 24 years ago when he started the coach business in preference to his family name to avoid confusion with other coach operators.

Sweyne now has four DAFs and six Leyland Leopards. A 1979 Volvo B58, exchanged for the Van Hool, was sold with only 400,000 km in the interests of standardisation.

The company runs everything from pit runs to private tours, but does not need 'executive' features on its coaches.

The specification on the latest DAF 2305 DHS includes 53 reclining seats, centre continental door, reclining courier seat and curtains.

Already the new DAF has done two trips to Holland, but on each journey attracted unwelcome attention from vandals who tried to force entry through the continental door and a side locker.

Kirkwood's treble

KIRKWOOD'S Minicoaches, of Falkirk, has a triple first - its first new coach, its first Mercedes-Benz and its first vehicle from Made to Measure, of Stockport.

The PSV midicoach seats 26 - the company's largest coach - and is based on Mercedes-Benz 609D.

It has S & J Minicoach signwriting to reflect the names of the father and son partnership - Jack and Stuart Kirkwood.

Britain's missed the bus...

THE 'we showed 'em' euphoria whipped up by the Tories after Maastricht is not really underlined by the facts.

Mealstop's overall impression of the opinion of the Rest of Europe when the UK bowed out of full co-operation was 'So what?' And a glance around the Dutch, state-supported, PSV trade just outside of the conference doors made it abundantly clear that Holland no more needs the UK's transport ideas than it needs a dozen tulip bulbs from Spalding.

United Bus reveals that even Queen Beatrix herself is hopping aboard the bandwagon - in this case a Den Oudsten Alliance Intercity bus which will be used by the Dutch Royals on the regular state occasions.

It runs on the same DAF SB220 underframe as the standard service vehicle, but the interior is a little more luxurious. There are just 20 armchair seats for a start.

Left and above: Holland's luxurious royal bus.

Who can imagine the UK's dignitaries taking the same stance? Let's face it, John Major *et al* wouldn't be seen dead in a bus... even if it were a Number 10.

● *MEALSTOP'S* man in Nottingham says the cover of our December 5 issue caused some concern for one of our readers.

Apparently, the sight of Harry Shaw's Van Hool 'decker had him seething: 'What a silly thing to do,' he is alleged to have said. 'Parking a 'decker on the brow of a hill... on a road with two solid white lines, where you shouldn't stop at all.'

Features editor, Mike Morgan, was miffed when he heard the criticism since he had braved the cold of a winter's day to wait in a field until it appeared in his camera lens moving at speed.

'Parked? Parked? What a cheek,' he muttered as he consulted the David Bailey Book of Action Photography...

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Taking part in tour programme would be commercial suicide

From William Varney

SIR

Given that operators all over the country claim to work for tour firms which pay far too little money, your readers will be interested in the correspondence I recently had with PGL School Tours, of Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire.

Earlier this month I received the following letter from a Mr John Firth, the product manager of PGL School Tours:

'PGL School Tours is one of Britain's leading school tour operators specialising in educational tours in Britain and Western Europe. We have enjoyed a most successful 1991 season and our bookings for 1992 are particularly pleasing. Throughout the year, we will have something in excess of 500 tours and, therefore, are looking to work with some new operators next season.

'The majority of our tours depart between the months of March and the middle of July and largely coincide with the working week - i.e. departing early on Monday morning, returning late the following Friday evening. Most of our groups require a standard coach, with only a few specifically requesting executive facilities. A large percentage of our tours will be going to the Boulogne and Normandy region of France and all itineraries involve the services of one driver only, although occasionally a feeder driver is required.

'We normally allocate operators' groups with pick-ups either en route or within the locality of your depot, thus minimising the need for any such drivers.

'If you are able to do a number of tours on our behalf in 1992 and are interested in working with us, I would be most grateful if you would contact me as a matter of some urgency. To give you an idea of the rates which I have recently agreed with our existing operators for 1992 (which are based on a considerable volume) I am looking to pay around the £150 per day figure for UK tours and £170 for departures to northern France. We will be responsible for providing accommodation for the driver and will take care of ferry charges where applicable.'

I replied as follows:

'Many thanks for your letter dated 3/12/91, the contents and requirements duly noted. The writer would be pleased to be involved in your 1992 programme, but not at your suggested rates of £150 to £170 per day. It is my opinion that any operator that sells his or her services to you at the prices quoted, is on his way to committing commercial suicide.

'The standing costs for a sensible coach in this company's costings is at least £110 per day, based on capital employed without starting the engine, or taking into account diesel, tyres, plus showing a profit margin that we all strive to achieve.

'However, listed below are my 1992 hire rates for your perusal, should they be of any use to you:

Standard 49 to 57 seats (UK touring) £215 per day.

Executive 49 to 51 seats (UK touring) £235 per day.

Standard 49 to 57 seats (continental touring) £245 per day.

Executive 49 to 51 seats (continental touring) £265 per day.

'These rates are applicable to pick-up and set-down points within 50 miles radius of this depot, additional pick-up and set-down mileage charged at 90p per day.

'Trusting to be favoured with your valued instructions.'

I would be interested in hearing the comments of other readers on this correspondence.

WILLIAM VARNEY
DIRECTOR AND GROUP GENERAL MANAGER
BISS BROTHERS COACHES
SPELLBROOK
NR BISHOP'S STORTFORD
HERTS

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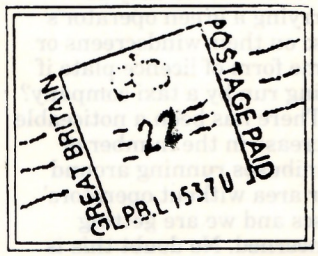
or by fax: 0733 62656



The editor is always pleased to receive letters for publication in *Coachmart* and will, if requested, publish these anonymously. But please attach your name and address for our own information.

Bruges is *encouraging* coach visitors

From Ted Kirkham

SIR

On behalf of the 50 hotels which are members of Promotie Toerisme Bruges, an organisation which has just launched an international campaign to raise the profile of Bruges as an all-seasons' holiday and leisure destination, may we comment on your report headed 'Brugge bans coaches' (*Coachmart*, December 5).

The traffic problems of Bruges are well-known to operators, but far from putting up the drawbridge against coach visitors, as the headline suggests, the city authorities propose a series of measures designed to make congested streets significantly more user-friendly.

Information so far available indicates that the drastic overhaul of traffic management arrangements due to come into effect next spring has taken account of the differing needs of stay-over and day-out operators.

For the former, there will be provision for setting down and picking up passengers and luggage at hotels, while short-term visitors will be catered for by a park and ride system, operated by minibuses running every few minutes between a large coach near the railway station and the centrum.

We are seeking detailed information about the regulations and hope shortly to be in a position to answer the questions of the many operators who have contacted us following your report.

Set up by Promotie Toerisme Bruges as its UK information point, the Bruges Tourism News Bureau is at the service of operators to advise and assist on matters of accommodation.

TED KIRKHAM
BRUGES TOURISM NEWS BUREAU
PO BOX 172
PETHAM
CANTERBURY
KENT

Help is needed

From a concerned operator

SIR

Can you tell me what the law is with regard to operating minibuses for hire and reward? Should they be carrying a green operator's disc on their windscreens or some form of licence plate if being run by a taxi company?

There has been a noticeable increase in the number of minibuses running around our area without operators' discs and we are getting concerned. No doubt this is happening in other areas of the country. Are these people running their minibuses legally or illegally?

Also, can insurance companies undertake to insure minibuses used for hire and reward without operator identity?

A CONCERNED OPERATOR
ESSEX

ED - I have passed your letter onto Marksman, who will answer it in Questions and Answers on January 2.

Clarification is given on insurance 'capping'

From Bryan Hardy

SIR

I have read the lead question on *Marksman's* page in *Coachmart's* November 7 issue about being able to 'cap' future increases in coach motor premiums and thought that I would respond if only to 'feed' *Marksman* with another topic upon which to write a full-page report.

Whilst *Marksman's* answer was not technically wrong, I would have liked him to qualify his reply to *MG of Leics* in order to have given a fuller account of the true situation to your readership because, without first knowing how many vehicles the questioner actually operates, *Marksman* could have given him false hope.

From my knowledge of the coach insurance market this 'capping' option is only available from one underwriter and then it will only be considered if the actual overall size of the coach company is big enough in establishment, standard of 'yard' facilities and premium size etc.

Past claims' experience/costings will also be taken into account as with conventional motor fleet premium rating.

Therefore, with respect, I would suggest that the majority of coach companies/operators in the UK (including possibly *MG of Leics)* would not meet the criteria required to even be eligible for this concession.

Perhaps I should also report that from my constant discussions with underwriters, I cannot see this innovation growing in popularity amongst the insurance companies particularly in view of the current uncertain financial climate and at a time when the announcement of record trading losses and still commonplace.

I hope this letter will be of some assistance

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1987 MERCEDES 609, 19 seater minibus, current MoT ~~£15,950~~	**£14,950**
1986 DUPLE 340 Tiger, 49 seater with toilet, current MoT ~~£45,000~~	**£39,500**
1985 PLAXTON 3500 Tiger, 51 seater, toilet, current MoT ~~£40,000~~	**£37,000**
1985 PLAXTON 3200 Tiger, 57 seater, seats recovered ~~£36,000~~	**£34,000**
1984 DUPLE Caribbean Volvo, 49 seater, toilet ~~£34,000~~	**£32,000**
1984 B10M Duple Caribbean, 49 seater, toilet, TV, current MoT ~~£34,000~~	**£32,000**
1984 LEYLAND Royal Tiger 245 Plaxton 3500, 49 seater, toilet, current MoT ~~£36,000~~	**£31,000**
1983 VOLVO B10M Berkhof Esprite, 49 seater, rear sunken toilet, current MoT ~~£34,000~~	**£32,000**
1983 DAF Plaxton DK TL 3500 Paramount, front toilet, current MoT ~~£35,000~~	**£32,000**
1983 VOLVO B10M Jonckheere P90, full executive specification ~~£35,000~~	**£29,500**
1983 LEYLAND Tiger 245 Plaxton 3500, 49 seater, toilet, current MoT ~~£33,000~~	**£29,500**
1982 VOLVO Jonckheere Bermuda, 49 seater, toilet, seats recovered ~~£27,000~~	**£25,000**
1982 VOLVO B58 Air Over Leaf, 49 seater, toilet, current MoT ~~£25,000~~	**£23,000**
1982 DAF SMIT Highliner DK TL, 47 seater, toilet, current MoT ~~£26,000~~	**£23,000**

Holiday pay schemes can cause problems

Q I READ with interest your answer regarding a holiday pay scheme for hourly-paid employees in a recent issue of *Coachmart*.

As the hourly-based payments' formula appears straightforward, how would you propose to pay salaried staff to give this incentive?

DT, Gloucs

A IN MY, mainly family run, business, this has never been a problem.

Almost by definition in my case, salaried staff are on trust to take no more holiday than they are allowed. In fact, most do not take all of their entitlement. Clearly this is not the case everywhere and the old complications of monitoring when the entitlement is earned in relation to when holidays are taken can create not only an administrative burden in relation to salaried staff, but friction too.

If I needed to have a matching system for salaried staff to that which serves those hourly-paid, I would be going along the lines given in this example.

Suppose you have a person salaried at £15,000 p.a. who is entitled to six weeks paid holiday (including Bank Holidays).

He works a normal Monday to Friday week. He has (six weeks x five days) 30 days paid holiday a year and works for (46 weeks x five days) 230 days and thus is paid an average of £57.69 for each of 260 days - and thus £1730.70 in respect of the 30 days holiday.

That £1730.70 works out at £7.52 for each of the WORKING days. So if salary is only paid at £57.69 per day actually worked, and £7.52 credited to a holiday fund for each day worked, this creates the same approach as that applied to hourly-paid workers.

The snag is, of course, that this brings a time-based element into the concept of 'salary' - almost a contradiction in terms. Furthermore, in this industry many salaried employees are 'on call' for more than five days a week and it therefore becomes hard to know which non-working days are actually part of the holiday entitlement; and also to define whether popping in for a couple of hours on a Sunday morning to sort out a problem represents a day's work.

In summary, therefore, although there may be some scope to run a money-based holiday pay scheme for salaried staff, it may cause more problems than it solves.

QUESTIONS answers

Questions on any aspect of coach operation that is giving you problems should be sent to: Marksman, c/o *Coachmart*, Wentworth House, Wentworth Street, Peterborough, PE1 1DS, or by fax: 0733 62656.

Q FOLLOWING an accident, some passengers were taken to hospital to have small injuries dressed.

We have now had a bill from the hospital for emergency treatment. Is this another new way to help the NHS to profit?

BW, Berks

A NO A nominal payment for hospital emergency treatment is a very long-standing provision of road traffic legislation.
Your insurers will settle this if you pass it to them.

However, the law requires the hospital to submit these bills within seven days of the emergency treatment being given.

If it was not sent within that time limit you are quite within your rights to return it to the hospital, unpaid, advising that it was not submitted as required by the law.

Q HOW much can drivers be paid for meals and other allowances without tax?

Some coach operators seem to get away with paying very large tax free allowances as a substitute for taxed wages.

Can you please explain the situation?

WMY, Warwicks

A THERE is no limit on the reimbursement of genuine expenses for which a receipt is produced (and from which, incidentally, VAT can be reclaimed).

But as you use the word allowances I presume that you refer to fixed payments for deemed expenses rather than the actual reimbursement.

Strictly speaking, the answer is that nothing can be paid in this way without the agreement of your local tax office.

There is, at present, no national agreement (as there is in road haulage) for meal and overnight allowances.

Many coach operators, and some local operator associations, have reached agreement with tax offices to pay not only the things already mentioned, but also for items like maps and guide books, PCV licences and medical examinations, 'hospitality' on tours, dry cleaning of uniform garments and even the drivers' own provision of coach cleaning materials.

Q IF A part-time driver does work for more than one employer, what is he supposed to do with all of his completed tachograph discs?

RS, Cumbria

A THE driver has to give all of his tachograph discs to the person who has employed him the longest (not the one who currently employs him the most).

He is also under a duty to notify each employer of his other employer(s) name and address.

Presumably they are then supposed to liaise to ensure that this roving part-time employee's driving hours comply with overall legal limits, but the current legislation does not actually state this in categorical terms.

Marksman will answer more questions in the New Year

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GUARDIAN'S REVERSE OF FORTUNE

Features editor, Mike Morgan, reports on our Maintenance Diary volunteers' experience during the third of *Coachmart's* latest survey of six coaches.

TRAGEDY has struck Guardian International for a third time. Last month it was an arson attack on the Scoins' family home followed by a theft from the company's Jonckheere Bermuda-bodied DAF. Now it's a reversing accident.

The nearside mirror glass crashed to the ground after hitting a tree. Subsequently, the driver reversed into a parked trailer causing £700 worth of damage to the coach. Nevertheless, Mike Scoins is not distracted from the importance of keeping the nine-year-old DAF in first-class order. Top of the maintenance list was attention to the interior - the roof lining was scrubbed. Mr Scoins says it looks like new.

Problems rectified this month for our other five operators were also mainly of a routine nature. All are reporting faithful service from their different coaches.

Over the border, the two Scottish operators - Allander and Silver Coachlines - have sharply contrasting vehicles. The Setra of Silver Coachlines did nearly 4,000 miles and it only needed new screws on the Webasto fuel pump - then only as as a precautionary measure.

Down in glorious Devon, Carmel is going through a quiet period. Its Leopard turns out twice-daily on a schools' run and only required attention to a wiring fault, a perished hose, and a fractured bracket.

Further east in Woking, K Valley continues to be impressed with the reliability of the latest Leyland DAF 400.

Owner, Frank Trotman, claims it is a delight. Strange noises apart, the new coach has run for four months with very few teething troubles.

As the six operators reach the half-way point, the survey starts to take shape and fuel consumption figures begin to settle-down. Allander's rebodied Volvo B58 hovers around nine mpg - as does Carmel's Leopard and Guardian's DAF and Silver Coachlines' Setra.

In previous surveys Volvo consumption varied by 1.5 mpg - Midland United's Volvo returned 9.78 mpg, Kime's Volvo 9.68 mpg, whereas Bruce's LondonLiner Volvo was down to 8.28 mpg.

Without doubt the worst of the winter is yet to come. Like all other operators in the land, the *Coachmart* sextet are hoping preventative maintenance and good fortune keeps the wheels turning.

Maintenance Diary will monitor their progess until the end of February. To find out how they fare during December read *Coachmart* on January 16, 1992.

Maintenance: most vehicles needed only routine attention this month.

Month Three - November 1991

ALLANDER'S VOLVO - Specification

Chassis - Volvo B58
Engine - Volvo THD 100
Gearbox - ZF six-speed
Body - 1991 Plaxton Paramount 3200 - 49 seats
Date first registered - August 1979

Maintenance report

Mileage this month - 2,394 miles
Total mileage since September 1, 1991 - 11,819 miles
Type of work - private hire and day tours
Fuel used this month - 266 gallons
Total fuel used since September 1, 1991 - 1,301.5 gallons
Fuel consumption this month - 9 mpg
Average fuel consumption since September 1, 1991 - 9.1 mpg
Engine oil used this month - four pints
Total engine oil used since September 1, 1991 - 12 pints
Tyre maintenance this month - nil
Problems rectified this month - nil

CARMEL'S LEOPARD - Specification

Chassis - Leyland Leopard PSU5 - 12-metre
Engine - Leyland 680
Gearbox - five-speed semi-automatic

Body - Plaxton Supreme 3 - 55 seats
Date first registered - April 1979

Maintenance report

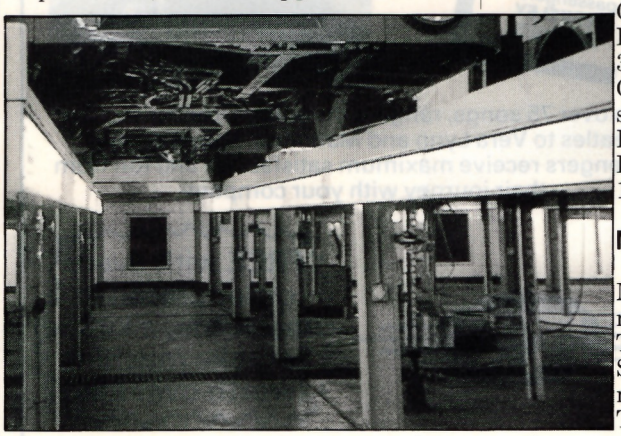
Mileage this month - 1,611 miles
Total mileage since September 1, 1991 - 4,896 miles
Type of work - school contracts and private hire
Fuel used this month - 189.85 gallons
Total fuel used since September 1, 1991 - 554.25 gallons
Fuel consumption this month - 8.45 mpg
Average consumption since September 1, 1991 - 8.8 mpg
Engine oil used this month - two pints
Total engine oil used since September 1, 1991 - six pints
Tyre maintenance this month - nil
Problems rectified this month - routine monthly inspection revealed: a wiring fault affecting brake and reverse lights; a perished heater hose, and a fractured flexible exhaust pipe bracket.
Comments - Tony Hazell said: 'Although work is quiet, resulting in a low mileage, maintenance for this vehicle has been light. It normally operates the school contract which has the shortest mileage, but carries most passengers. During the month it did not miss a single journey as all maintenance was easily completed between morning and afternoon school journeys.'

GUARDIAN'S DAF - Specification

Chassis - DAF MB200
Engine - 11.6 litre DAF DKFL 256 bhp
Gearbox - ZF six-speed S6.90 with splitter
Body - Jonckheere Bermuda
Date first registered - 1982

Maintenance report

Mileage this month - 2,684.4 miles
Total mileage since September 1, 1991 - 8,353 miles
Type of work - private hire and school contracts
Fuel used this month - 313 gallons
Total fuel used since September 1, 1991 - 922.18 gallons
Fuel consumption this month - 8.57 mpg
Average fuel consumption since September 1, 1991 - 9 mpg



Half-way through the survey, our maintenance feature starts to take shape.

Looking after your vehicles can save you long-term problems.

Engine oil used this month - one gallon
Total engine oil used since September 1, 1991 - three gallons
Tyre maintenance this month - nil
Problems rectified this month - the nearside mirror hit an overhanging tree. The glass fell out and later that day the driver reversed into a parked trailer. Mike Scoins estimates repairs for rebuilding the rear nearside corner and boot skin will cost £700.
Comments - The vehicle will be sent for repair during the Christmas holiday period. Meanwhile the rear light bulbs were replaced and the mirror arm, weakened in the earlier collision, required welding back into position. An air dryer kit replaced the old one which was exhausted. Anti-freeze was added to the engine coolant and all in-line fuel lines were checked because fuel economy appeared to be lower than usual. The roof lining was scrubbed. Mike Scoins says it looks like new.

JOHNSON'S SCANIA - Specification

Chassis - Scania K113
Engine - 11 litre Scania DS11 320 bhp
Gearbox - GS772 Scania five-speed with splitter
Body - Van Hool
Date first registered - August 1991

Maintenance report

Mileage this month - 1,875 miles
Total mileage since September 1, 1991 - 8,492.6 miles
Type of work - tours and private hire
Fuel used this month - 180 gallons
Total fuel used since September 1, 1991 - 826.7 gallons
Fuel consumption this month - 10.4 mpg
Average fuel consumption since September 1, 1991 - 10.27 mpg
Engine oil used this month - nil
Total engine oil used since September 1, 1991 - nil
Tyre maintenance this month - nil
Problems rectified this month - nil

K VALLEY'S LEYLAND DAF - Specification

Chassis - Leyland DAF 400
Engine - Peugeot 2.5 litre direct injection
Gearbox - Peugeot five-speed
Body - Crystals 16 seats (all with belts)
Date first registered - August 1991

Maintenance report

Mileage this month - 2,016 miles
Total mileage since September 1, 1991 - 4,745 miles
Type of work - school contract and private hire
Fuel used this month - 79.09 gallons
Total fuel used since September 1, 1991 - 177.25 gallons
Fuel consumption this month - 25.49 mpg
Average fuel consumption since September 1, 1991 - 26.8 mpg
Engine oil used this month - nil
Total engine oil used since September 1, 1991 - one pint
Tyre maintenance this month - nil
Problems rectified this month - nil
Comments - Frank Trotman says that Leyland DAF's area manager, Jeff Coles, traced the source of the strange noise reported last month to the alternator and the coach has been booked-in for a replacement part. At the same time it will receive attention to rust in the seam above the windows on the back doors.

SILVER COACHLINES' KASSBOHRER - Specification

Vehicle - Kassbohrer Setra 215 HDI
Engine - Mercedes-Benz OM422
Gearbox - ZF six-speed
Body - Setra 215HD
Date first registered - April 1989

Maintenance report

Mileage this month - 3,844 miles
Total mileage since September 1, 1991 - 12,587 miles
Type of work - private hire
Fuel used this month - 394 gallons
Total fuel used since September 1, 1991 - 1,396 gallons
Fuel consumption this month - 9.7 mpg
Average fuel consumption since September 1, 1991 - 9 mpg
Engine oil used this month - two pints
Total engine oil used since September 1, 1991 - two pints
Tyre maintenance this month - nil

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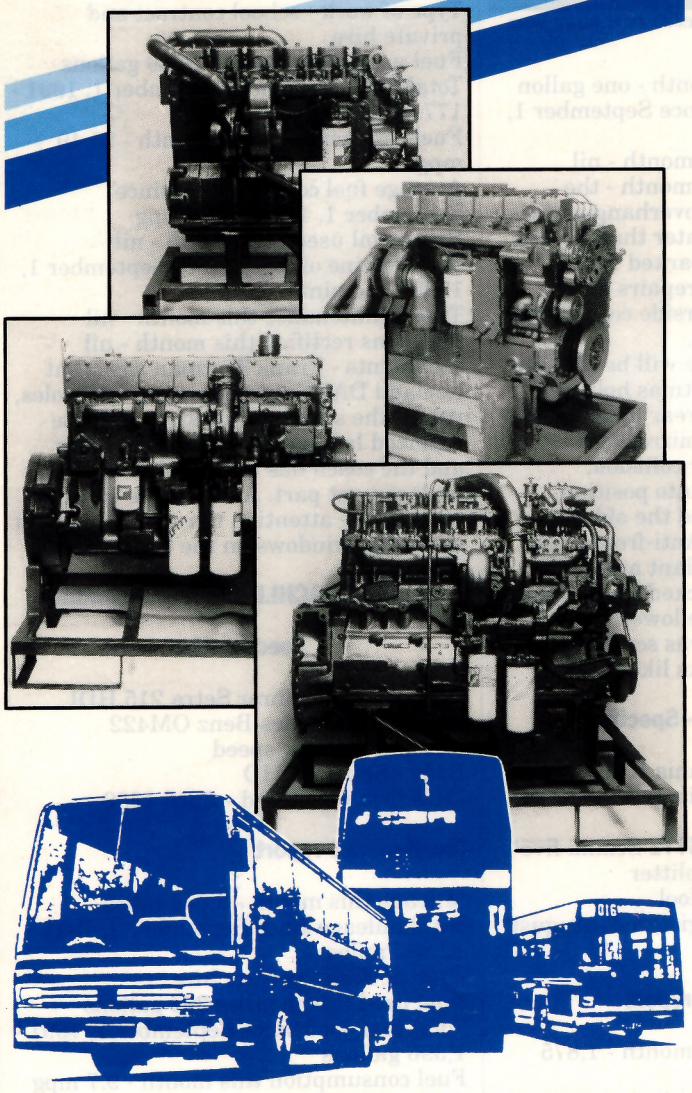

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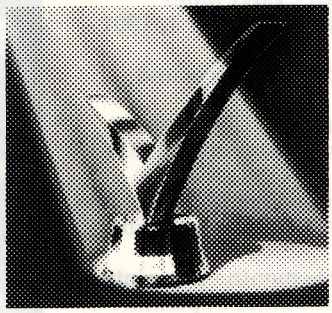

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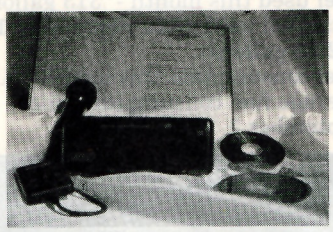

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Weekly report on law and the coach operator by Michael Jewell

Warrington CT told to reinstate employee

WARRINGTON Community Transport has been ordered to reinstate a minibus driver dismissed after a number of minor accidents.

A Manchester industrial tribunal concluded that his dismissal was unfair. It was told that Anthony Poole had been employed as a minibus driver by the organisation since November 1984. It was suggested he had been on a final warning since August 1990, but the letter written to Mr Poole at that time stated that the organisation would overlook a minor accident.

Following three comparatively minor incidents at the beginning of March, Mr Poole was suspended while the matter was considered by a sub-committee, which decided to dismiss him.

Mr Poole was not present at that meeting, nor was his representative who had written and asked if he could be present. Mr Poole appealed against his dismissal and that appeal was heard by another sub-committee which comprised two of the people who were involved in the original dismissal decision.

It seemed to the tribunal that the failure to provide Mr Poole with a proper disciplinary hearing, and a bonafide appeal, must make his dismissal unfair. It was further satisfied that no reasonable employer would have regarded the three incidents that week as justifying dismissal.

Greer Buckley, chairperson of the organisation, said the main reason Mr Poole had been dismissed was because of concern about insurance cover and the increasing expense of such cover.

She suggested that the future of the organisation could be in jeopardy through escalating insurance costs. She also felt that Mr Poole, having had two accidents within six months, would create anxiety among their customers.

The tribunal said its view was that if insurance was a problem, then the organisation ought to have told all drivers that accidents for which they were responsible, even if they were minor, would result in dismissal. That was never done.

The tribunal did not believe for a moment that any reasonable employer would have concluded that two accidents in six months would have had an effect on the confidence of customers.

They said that Mr Poole had given evidence, which was not contradicted, that other drivers had suffered accidents and had only received letters from the organisation. To put it simply, it believed that no reasonable employer, in the circumstances of the case, would have concluded that dismissal was the appropriate sanction.

It did not believe that Mr Poole had contributed to his own dismissal in any way. Had there been a proper procedure conducted by an impartial employer, he most certainly would not have lost his employment.

The only argument that Mrs Buckley had against reinstatement was the possible loss of confidence by customers.

The tribunal did not think that was a valid argument in any way whatsoever.

Company cleared after death crash

THE High Court has ruled that London Country Bus (South West) Ltd is not liable for the death of a pedestrian, knocked down after one of the company's minibuses had been stolen by an unknown person.

David Topp had sued the company for damages following the death of his wife. It was argued that the company had been negligent in leaving an unattended minibus on the highway with the ignition key in the lock, it constituting a source of danger which forseeably could result in death.

Mr Justice May said that a parked minibus was no more an obvious source of danger than any other vehicle. Although it was reasonably forseeable that the bus might be stolen, and that the thief might drive it carelessly and thus injure other road users.

There could be many different circumstances in which a vehicle, standing unlocked and with an ignition key in the switch, might be stolen and then driven negligently so as to cause injury or damage.

The owner might or might not have been careless for his own property, but he should not be held responsible for the wrong-doing of criminal hijackers.

Ribble driver loses unfair dismissal case

A BUS driver alleged to have assaulted a female passenger has lost his claim for unfair dismissal against Ribble Motor Services Ltd.

In rejecting the claim by Mohammed Rashid, a Manchester industrial tribunal said the matter before it was wholly an industrial matter and not a criminal one. It had to decide whether, at the time of Mr Rashid's dismissal, Ribble genuinely believed he was guilty of the misconduct alleged, whether the company had reasonable grounds for that belief and whether it had carried out a reasonable investigation into the circumstances.

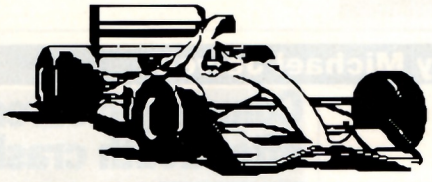
At the initial disciplinary hearing on March 12, it was strongly argued on Mr Rashid's behalf that he had never left the cab of his bus. It was only at the subsequent disciplinary hearing, on March 14, after Ribble had interviewed other witnesses who contradicted that statement, that Mr Rashid conceded he had gone to the top of the stairs.

Mr Rashid had said he had only gone up three of four steps.

Ribble: tribunal said it had carried out a reasonable inquiry.

Ribble had said his change of story, and its doubts as to Mr Rashid's credibility, served to make it prefer the version of events given by the young lady complainant and confirm the initial good impression she had made on its inspector.

It concluded Ribble had carried out a reasonable investigation and that Mr Rashid had been given a full opportunity of explaining. It considered Ribble had been reasonable to take the view that this was a serious matter, constituting gross misconduct sufficient to warrant dismissal. ▶



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7th - 9th February 1992

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Saturday 8th Feb. 10am-5pm
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Weekly report on law and the coach operator by Michael Jewell

Mibbo Singh Thandi is penalised

TRANSOL, the Wednesbury-based company run by Mibbo Singh Thandi, has had its licence slashed by West Midland traffic commissioner, John Mervyn Pugh, so that it now expires at the end of February.

The company had been seeking to increase the authorisation on its licence from five to eight vehicles, and the proceedings had been earlier adjourned when a vehicle examiner was unable to attend.

For Transol, John Turner said it was currently parking and maintaining its vehicles at Crankhall Lane, Wednesbury. It had made arrangements for the maintenance to be undertaken by a commercial garage in Handsworth. However, that garage was no longer in business and Transol had arranged to lease its former premises in Holyhead Road. That would give it very much better facilities. Since his last appearance before the commissioner, Mr Thandi had been to a new operators' seminar and had armed himself with the proper books, including the Department of Transport Guide to Roadworthiness.

Mr Mervyn Pugh said that though that guide was very good, the traffic area's recommended system of maintenance was better.

Mr Turner said the problems the company faced related entirely to July and August 1991. Mr Mervyn Pugh said the tragedy was that it had not accepted the advice given about a planned maintenance system when the licence was granted.

'It is the classic story of someone given advice, who does not take it and who gets into a mess,' he said.

DTp vehicle examiner, John Dignam, said that he had arranged to visit the company's premises, giving Mr Thandi a week's notice. The Crankhall Lane premises consisted of an open piece of tarmac, with a couple of coaches parked there. Mr Thandi said that one of the vehicles was not licensed. He inspected the other, issuing an immediate prohibition for seven items, three of which were dangerous. His overall impression was that the vehicle had been neglected. He arranged to inspect the rest of the company's vehicles at the test station. He inspected four vehicles, issuing one immediate and three delayed prohibitions, all of which were endorsed 'neglect'. There was a general pattern of no satisfactory maintenance.

Mr Mervyn Pugh said a further immediate prohibition was issued by another vehicle examiner in January to a vehicle found to have a loose steering box, and three lesser defects.

DTp vehicle examiner, Christopher Hetherington, said the proposed new premises at Handsworth were ideal. The company currently had a maintenance contract with Leyland DAF agent, Evans Halshaw. He felt Mr Thandi was capable of doing his own maintenance at the new premises, but he would like to see him maintain his existing vehicles for a period before any additional vehicles were granted.

Mr Mervyn Pugh told Mibbo Singh Thandi: 'If I can make you a good operator, I shall give myself a pat on the back.'

Six vehicles in possession had all recently passed the MoT test, he said, and Mr Thandi now appeared to have got his act together and to have taken the advice given to him at every stage. It was now a question of whether Mr Thandi could maintain that standard.

Mr Mervyn Pugh said he intended to cut the duration of the licence so it only had a short period to run, to give Mr Thandi the opportunity of proving the new system worked, before considering the grant of any additional vehicles.

Mr Mervyn Pugh heard that in signing the lease for the new premises, the company would be incurring additional rent of £12,000 a year. Routes were currently available if it had the additional vehicles. If it moved premises with the additional vehicles, it would feel financially secure. Otherwise, Transol might not be able to afford the new premises.

Mr Mervyn Pugh said he could not take commercial considerations into account, but it would be a tragedy if the company found it was unable to afford to maintain the vehicles. He suggested it might consider continuing with Evans Halshaw and leave the lease of the new premises in abeyance.

He said traffic commissioners were not dictators, only advisers. The operator himself had to decide on the maintenance system. All he could do was advise operators of the system he knew that worked. If operators went off on a frolic of their own, ignoring advice, and then failed, they were going to lose their licences.

Mr Turner said Mr Thandi was the general manager of the company, and not a director or shareholder. He had no financial interest in the company, and Mr Thandi said his brother-in-law was the major shareholder and director.

But he was in charge of the day-to-day operation, and Mr Mervyn Pugh said this was not the first time that Mr Thandi had been before him.

Mr Thandi had gone bankrupt. He had operated successfully for some years but things had gone wrong after negotiating a contract with National Express. He said that he had an ex-Carlyle works mechanic ready to start as soon as the company moved to Handsworth.

Mr Mervyn Pugh said that when the company signed the lease for the Handsworth premises was a commercial decision. However, if it got a further prohibition notice it might end up with a lease for premises it could not use as it would not have a licence.

After Mr Turner had withdrawn the application for additional vehicles, Mr Mervyn Pugh indicated that that had been a wise decision. He said the future at the moment looked pretty rosy.

Transol was clearly trying to prove that it could run a proper, safe, operation. It now had five vehicles that no-one could say were 'dodgy', as they had all recently been tested. Now, for the first time since he had been involved with public service vehicles, Mr Thandi was on a learning curve.

'If I can make you into a good operator, I shall pat myself on the back and say that I have done a good job,' said Mr Mervyn Pugh. If there were no valid objections, and no prohibitions that gave him cause for concern, he would be inclined to grant an increase in authorisation to eight vehicles after the end of February.

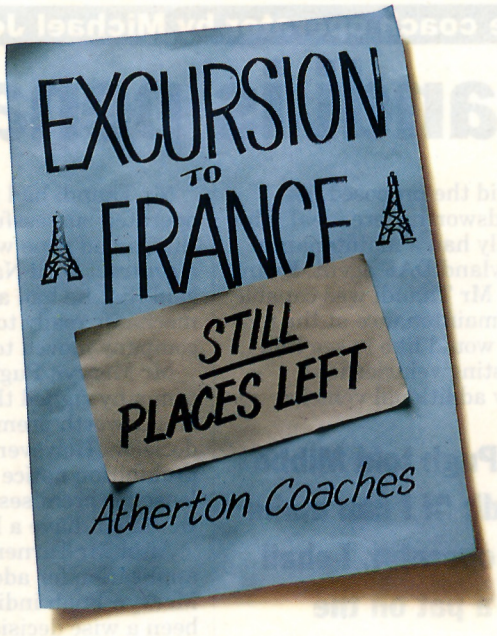
Brookside is warned

FIVE immediate prohibition notices between April and July have brought a warning for Brookside Travel Service, of Penzance.

T S, T F and J K Thomas, trading as Brookside, of Relubbus, appeared at disciplinary proceedings before Western traffic commissioner, Air Vice Marshal Ronald Ashford.

Issuing a stern warning that there had to be a marked and sustained improvement in maintenance standards, Air Vice Marshal Ashford cut the duration of the licence so that it now expires at the end of April 1993, instead of in April 1994, and imposed a condition restricting the licence authorisation to single-deck vehicles only.

However, he was prepared to grant an application by the firm to increase the authorisation from seven to nine vehicles, after being told additional vehicles were needed to fulfill private hire and contractual commitments.



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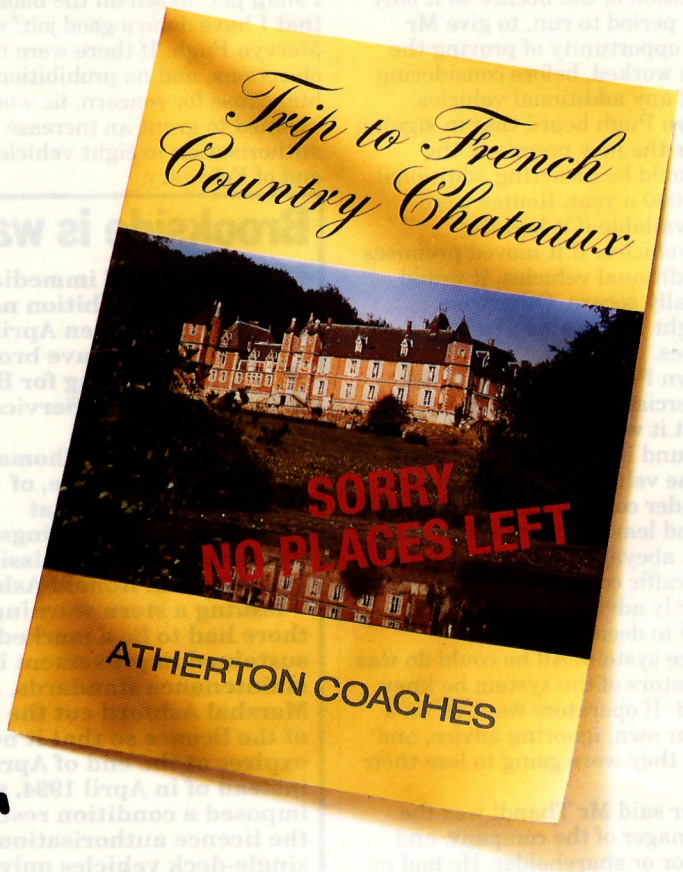

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National Trust launches first survey of coaching market

New guide heralds assault on group trade

THE National Trust is to co-ordinate a survey of group visitors.

In the week in which it launches its superb tour operators' guide it revealed that a new themed section in the manual is just the start of a campaign to boost attendances. The loose-leaf guide to Britain's heritage - a comprehensive collection of some of the best stately homes and gardens - the manual gives full details of group charges and tour rates with a line drawing of each of the attractions.

So far, the National Trust has had no way of finding out what proportion of its visitors come from the group travel trade, but 1992 sees the first attempt to collate figures from all it properties.

"We are trying to increase the group market,' NT marketing manager, Rosemary Lightbody, told *Coachmart*. 'The response we have had to the guide has been enormous but we haven't been able until now to get to know how that relates to business at property level.

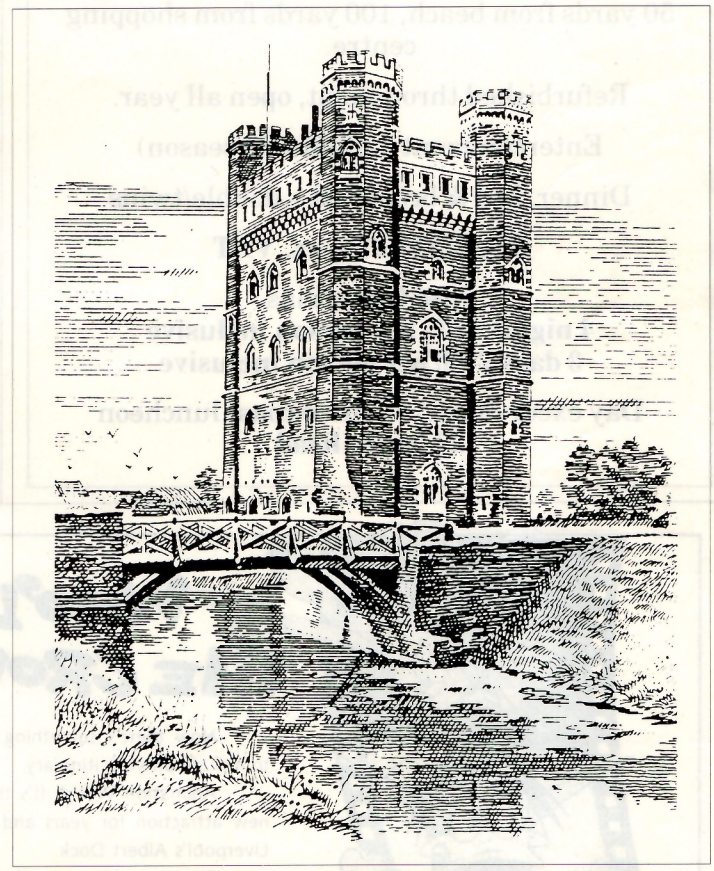
'Clearly, we'd like more operators to contact us. We are still trying to expand on group tours generally and boost our attendance... last year, almost 10.5 million visitors.'

Changes in this year's guide include a new section which groups properties, with a view to making it easier for operators to single out suitable NT attractions for special interest groups. Categories include 'Upstairs Downstairs Properties' and 'Autumn Colour.'

But above all, Rosemary Lightbody would like operators to contact her direct for information, guidance or even itineraries, and book direct with properties afterwards.

With its charitable status, the National Trust offers a vast range of venues at reasonable rates. It's a fact that, no matter where you are in the UK, a National Trust property is nearby.

One of the bonuses of using National Trust properties is that your group is contributing to their preservation, and the preservation of a number of historic and beautiful areas.



Tattershall Castle: Just one of the huge number of National Trust properties set to get a group tourism boost next year.

Details and copies of the tour operators' manual are currently available from the National Trust, at 36 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AS, Tel: 071 222 9251, Fax: 071 222 5097.

New discounts at Belgian park

BRUGES attraction Boudewin Park has set its sights on the coach trade with its 1992 group discounts.

The Belgian leisure park is offering not only discounts for visits to the dolphinarium, ice show and its other attractions, but has tied up with Bruges' canal boats and guided tours to offer a further 10 percent discount.

Operators taking disabled people can get a free ticket in every 10 bought or one in five for wheelchair users. Drivers get the usual free entry in addition.

Boudewin Park is also well placed to cater for groups, with an *a la carte* restaurant seating 60 and three 'party rooms' seating between 200 and 1,200 diners.

Menus include a Flemish Brueghel meal in which all beer is free, but this is limited to groups of 200 or more.

Boudewin Park's all-in ticket, admitting clients to the dolphinarium, holiday on ice show - Alice in Wonderland, which starts May 21, 1992 - and the Heirmanclock astronomy clock for 320 BF. Corresponding childrens' price is 240 BF and OAP price 280 BF.

Full details of Boudewin Park are available from Georges Lintel on 010 32 50 38 38 38, Fax: 010 32 50 382343.

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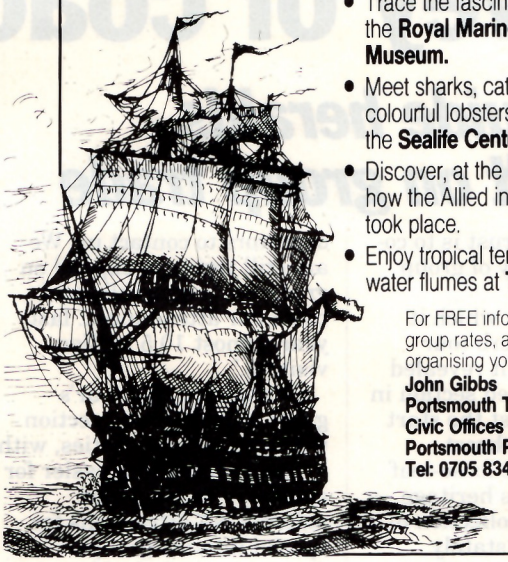

- Trace the fascinating history of the **Royal Marines** at their **Museum.**
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- Discover, at the **D-Day Museum** how the Allied invasion of Europe took place.
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For FREE information, details of group rates, and assistance in organising your tour contact:
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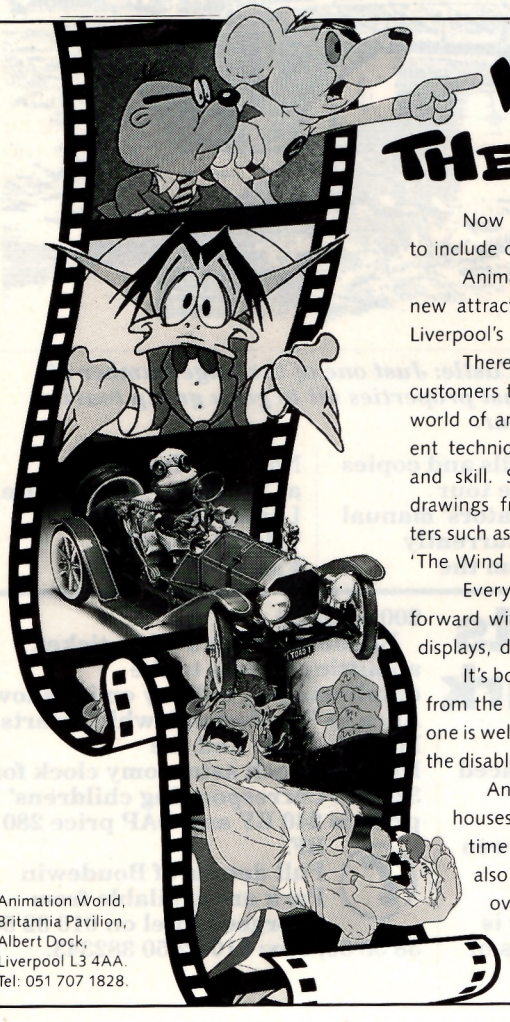
Portsmouth Tourism (CO)
Civic Offices
Portsmouth PO1 2BG
Tel: 0705 834086



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And remember, the Albert Dock also houses the Beatles' Exhibition, The Maritime Museum and Tate Gallery. There's also a wide variety of places to eat and over fifty enticing shops.

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Travel trade flocks to NEC

New tourism show already a sell-out

APRIL'S British Travel Trade Fair is a sell-out, with more than 600 destinations and attractions.

The tourism show, which replaces Wales' Travelpact and the English Tourist Board's MOOT, has inherited some of the confidence shown in both shows. Support has come from all the usual exhibitors and some fresh faces.

Some surprising names are among the line-up of 30 or so newcomers. Tussauds Group, In Defence of the Realm, Rainbow European Travel House, Royal Palaces, P&O European Ferries and British Nuclear Fuels will be new to regular MOOT visitors.

Eleanor Muirhead: 'It's a top-level forum, so don't be surprised if sparks fly.'

The show now takes in all of the UK, including Northern Ireland. Wales has set up its own 'village' of more than 50 exhibitors, including Llechwedd Slate Caverns, Ruthin Castle, Rhondda Heritage Park, Colwyn Bay's Welsh Mountain Zoo and Welsh Historic Monuments. Destinations represented include Llangollen, Gwent, Merionnydd and Cardiff.

On the Scottish front, the array of attractions and destinations is supplemented by a number of top-class hotels looking to do business with groups during 1992 and 1993.

But BTTF isn't all buying and selling, wheeling and dealing. During the two days, a number of seminars are being organised at least one of which will be aimed at the coach industry. The Bus & Coach Council and Coach Tourism Council are discussing the topics to be covered.

Then there's the conference, held before the show opens for business. Major tourism industry figures are hoping to stimulate lively debate with controversial views.

'This is a top-level forum,' said BTTF organiser, Eleanor Muirhead. 'We expect the different sides to air their views frankly, and don't be surprised if the odd spark flies!'

Sponsored by *Coachmart,* the BTTF is targeted heavily at the operator. It's the ideal occasion to brush up your knowledge of the latest attractions, find the best hotel deals, or even draw up a tour programme for the first time.

Stands will be manned by company and tourism decision makers, most of whom will be happy to do business direct with coach operators.

'You can be sure of one thing,' said Eleanor Muirhead. 'If you are a coach operator in the UK market and you don't come to BTTF, you may well be giving your competitors the leading edge.'

The British Travel Trade Fair is at the NEC, Birmingham, on April 1 and 2. Pre-registration and further details are available from the British Travel Trade Fair '92 Office, PO Box 2802, London W6 9EQ, Tel: 081 846 9000.

MetroCentre ready for January sales

GATESHEAD'S MetroCentre is steeling itself for the sales, which last year attracted 140,000 shoppers.

The first day is December 27, when stores throughout Europe's biggest covered shopping centre drop their prices. The 1990 sale was so popular, it got national publicity.

New Year's Day the shops open at 10 am and MetroCentre begins a special celebration in which entry to Metroland park and all rides are free. A pantomime, which began this week, will run through to January 5, with performances at 3 pm and 6 pm.

Most of the shops, restaurants and the 10-screen cinema open until 10 pm. MetroCentre has a dedicated coach park, driver rest room, and a newly-appointed coaching manager.

Details of MetroCentre are available from 091 493 2046, Fax: 091 493 2756.

CtC COACH • TOURISM • COUNCIL

● THE COACH Tourism Council has a new board member - Travel Weekly publisher, Richard Caisley.

The decision of the magazine to join the CTC coincides with the Bus & Coach Council's 'Year of Coach Travel and Tourism' initiative for 1992, and both should provide valuable publicity for the industry.

'The decision to invite Richard Caisley to the CTC board was made in light of Travel Weekly's total commitment to every sector of the travel industry,' said CTC chairman, Gerry Topiol.

'The negative publicity in both trade and consumer media from which the coach industry has suffered in the past has given coach travel and tourism a down-market image. We are delighted, therefore, to have Travel Weekly's support.'

● THE BCC's 1992 coach travel initiative will be closely tied in with the CTC throughout the campaign. Already, discussions have been held about the possibility of joint trade roadshows, as suggested at October's CTC board meeting.

● THE CTC's trade PR campaign through TWT has begun to bring results. TWT's Martin Wright revealed that the CTC is to be featured in the December edition of Holiday Shop, in Travel Agency magazine in January and in the Northern Ireland News.

● ANDY Grout, of Aladdin Tours, received 15 replies in his quest for a 1992 venue for Coaching for Pleasure Day. Only two venues - the Isle of Wight and Birmingham - made specific proposals. He said a further possibility would be to take CFPD to the Press, rather than vice versa, by attending an event such as the Cheltenham Gold Cup.

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SPECIAL COACHMART FEATURE

Factories can be fun for tours

In the last 10 years, industry has spawned a host of new attractions. Factories producing everything from films to electricity have come up with exhibitions which not only promote their wares, but offer a history of their stock in trade. *Coachmart* this week takes a look at a handful of these attractions.

THE idea of tourists visiting a factory is perhaps one of the newest developments in the travel industry.

Visits to industrial attractions are climbing in number - something few traditional venues can claim - and the number of attractions is growing to cope.

We are all curious about how other people make a living. Factories have become so specialised that few of us have any real knowledge of more than a handful, and it is this combined with the curiosity factor which draws people to industrial attractions.

From the factory's point of view, tourism makes sound commercial sense.

In the first place, every visitor takes away a better understanding of the problems of manufacturing, which may be very helpful if the industry in question needs to appeal for public sympathy.

Secondly, the visitor may later exhibit some bias towards the product he has seen made, providing the image was one which appealed to him or her. And finally, entry charges put money in the bank, as do factory shops and restaurants.

For the coach operator, visits to industrial attractions can also pay dividends.

In the main, tours are relatively inexpensive for the visitor, so the package seems to offer good value. Many exhibitions are heavily backed by a major national company, so the set-up is likely to be professional.

Coach access is usually excellent and the driver is looked after. And finally, a factory visit can liven up the image of an otherwise austere location. By their very nature, factory visits tend be in industrial areas.

The problems a factory visit may generate are limited. Most skirt the dust and take tourists through a clean environment, but some don't.

If a warm coat and wellies are order of the day, make sure your clients know this. If they are told beforehand, they'll turn a blind eye to the discomfort but if they aren't, the blame will lie with you.

Operators should target schools

INDUSTRIAL exhibitions and tours are eminently saleable to schools.

Operators seeking to expand their excursion market could do well to contact schools' careers advisors - normally senior teachers - to canvass for school visits. The range of industry represented by exhibitions should cover most demands.

Clearly, most factory exhibitions are geared around tourism rather than education. But almost all will give a more in-depth tour if pre-booked for a school visit, and many can supply information or school work sheets about careers in the industry concerned.

Specifically, museum exhibitions such as Catalyst, at Widnes, are heavily supported by big companies who have a vested interest in attracting students to their industry. Special arrangements may have to be made, but the benefit of doing so may lead to additional bookings in the future.

Granada TV is well worth a 'Return' visit

THE broad range of industrial attractions on offer in the UK is dominated by one of the most popular coach destinations... Granada Studios.

The birthplace of Coronation Street and a number of other ITV series is really no more than a TV factory.

This factory is already entertaining a huge number of people with its products, so its devotees already have a reason for going there. This is one exhibition which needs no introduction.

See one of Britain's most famous pubs, the Rover's Return from Coronation Street. That's a message which is easy to pass on and the chief marketing strategy of Granada Studios. But alongside the 'regulars', expect a changing scenery which directly reflects Granada TV's programming.

For make no mistake, this is a working studio... an exhibition of the TV industry.

Coronation Street: an entertaining coach tour destination.

More details on 061 833 0880.

SITUATIONS VACANT

PARIS & EURO DISNEY (R) RESORT

As one of the leading tour handling agents to Paris we are responsible for almost 40,000 bed nights a year. With the opening of Euro Disney Resort near Paris next year it is not surprising that demand for space has been even greater.

PARIS & EURO DISNEY RESORT IS A WINNING COMBINATION

As at the beginning of December we have 547 contracted groups for 1992 with a further 165 on option. Quite simply the baby has outgrown the pram so we are looking to create a totally separate PARIS & EURO DISNEY RESORT department.

ANOTHER WINNING COMBINATION

will be the addition of the senior member of staff we are seeking to head up this new department. Your responsibilities will include the day to day operation of existing business, developing future sales as well as contracting accommodation to meet future needs. In addition you will be expected to play a major role in the launch of a totally new Disney related product in the Spring of 1992.

You will no doubt be involved in tour operating currently at a relatively senior level with a good working knowledge of French and used to making decisions when required.

A current CV should be sent in the first instance to Nigel John at the address stated below.

If you would rather discuss the matter informally first then call the above on **0225 447567**

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Telex: 444261 CHARTS G Fax: 0225 444074

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TIME TRAVEL
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in association with museum of LONDON

Visitors to London are now able to experience London's first dark ride museum, illustrating 2,000 years of the City's colourful history. The travel trade is now able to enjoy the same experience at the push of a video play button.

The Pageant is located in Tower Hill Terrace, next to the Tower of London. Visitors travel in automated cars through the City's history, experiencing the sights, sounds, and smells of 2,000 years – thanks to the latest display techniques.

Within the Pageant the Museum of London is staging a unique display of waterfront archaeological finds. Tower Hill Terrace also has a range of shops and a McDonalds restaurant.

A special free VHS video tape has been prepared for the travel trade. It takes you through the Pageant – from the dark ride to the Museum display. For your copy send in the coupon or call us on 071-702 0982

Send to Marketing Department,
Tower Hill Pageant, 1 Tower Hill Terrace,
London EC3N 4EE
or Fax 071-702 3656

Please send me your free VHS tape

Name _____

Company _____ Position _____

Address _____

_____ Post code _____

Tel: _____

CM 19/12

National Gas Gallery opens

BRITISH Gas's £0.5 million National Gas Gallery has opened at Manchester's Museum of Science and Industry.

The exhibition depicts the history of gas, from the town gas beginnings through to the present day. Among gallery exhibits is an 'intelligent pig' - actually, a pipe-examining, remote-controlled sniffer which looks for leaks.

There is much to appeal to the older generations. Few will be able to remember the lamplighter who demonstrates his job but many older clients will enjoy the nostalgia of a 1930s gas showroom, and rare gas appliances like the gas hairdryer and gas cigar lighter on display.

The choice of Manchester is appropriate for a number of reasons. The city was the site of the first municipal gas company, and the first factory ever lit by gas was Phillips and Lee's in nearby Salford.

The new gallery was opened by British Gas chairman Robert Evans, who watched the Liverpool Everyman Theatre Group present its 'Whirlwind history tour of gas - from the beginning of time to the end of last week.'

'As you will see,' promised Mr Evans afterwards. '200 years of Britain's gas history is now brought to life here in one of Europe's largest industrial museums.'

The addition of the National Gas Gallery to the Museum of Science and Industry - the Museum of the Year in 1990 - adds to its appeal for school groups, who are widely catered for by the museum's back-up services.

Details of the Museum of Science and Industry are available by 'phoning 061 832 2244, Fax: 061 833 2184.

(Right)'It's a gas!': The Everyman Theatre Group helped open the new Gas Gallery in Manchester.

Jack's all right at Walsall!

WALSALL Leather Centre Museum is selling designer leather goods - thanks to 68-year-old Jack Halksworth.

The master craftsman, who has 50 years' of experience in the leather trade, is on hand Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Saturdays to demonstrate to visitors the art of working hide, while the museum shop will be selling his hand-made mementos.

Mr Halksworth is well-known in Walsall - the West Midlands centre of the leather industry - for he has trained new tradesmen and women for 20 years at Walsall College of Art.

'Most of us never think about how everyday items around us are produced,' said museum curator, Mike Glasson. 'I'm delighted that visitors can come to the museum and see Jack at work, talk to him and learn something of the skills which go into making items such as wallets and purses.'

Details of Walsall Leither Centre Museum are available by 'phoning 0922 721153.

Rosenthal in the MOMI spotlight

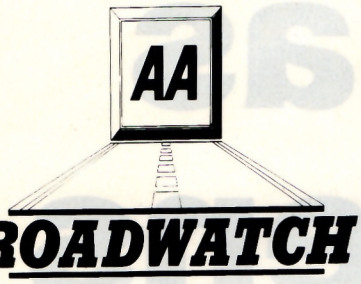
THE TELEVISION and film industry is the subject of MOMI - the widely-acclaimed museum on the South Bank in London.

The Museum of the Moving Image has proven to be a winner with groups, explaining a subject dear to the hearts of every age group and nationality.

MOMI screens themed films and TV shows regularly, and it is essential to plan around this information for special interest groups. During January, Jewish writer Jack Rosenthal is the subject and a number of his best-known plays will be shown. Highlight of the programme is on January 28, when Mr Rosenthal himself will talk to the audience after screenings of Bag Lady and Day to Remember.

New prices for admission to MOMI have been announced from January. Adult admission is £4.50, concessions are £3.50, and students £4. There is one free admission in ten for groups of under-12s, one in 15 for 12 and over and one in 20 for adults.

Full details of planned events and the museum itself are available by 'phoning 071 298 3535, or writing to MOMI, South Bank, London SE1 8XT.



This Roadwatch report was compiled by *Coachmart* with the help of the AA. If there are other points of information you need, write to Roadwatch PSV, *Coachmart*, Wentworth House, Wentworth Street, Peterborough, PE1 1DS.

New European roadworks

France

A89 Motorway link between Balbigny (N82 and A72, north west of Nervieux.
A13 La Londe, south west of Rouen. Lane closures (ends 6 Jan 92).
N15 Maromme, north of Rouen. Construction of a gyratory system. Alternating traffic scheme. Traffic signals (15 Feb 92).
N27 Totes, south of Dieppe. Speed limit restrictions (31 Dec 91).
N28 Maucomble, south west of Neufchatel en Bray. Speed limit restrictions (1 Aug 92).
N28 Rouen (Lyons Viaduct). Joints repair works. Width restrictions. Diversions (30 Dec 91).
D840 Ste Colombe La Commanderie, south west of Rouen. Resurfacing. Diversion (7 Jan 92).
N1 Wimille, north of Boulogne. Crossroads improvements (20 Dec 91).
N17 Bondues, north of Lille. Crossroads improvement. Diversions (6 Jan 92).
Calais Rocade Sud. Road widening. Lane closures (30 Apr 92).
N30 Trith St Leger, south of Valenciennes. Width restrictions (UFN).
N41 Fouquieres les Bethune, south west of Bethune. Gas works. Diversions (21 Feb 92).
N43 Joeuf to Auboue, south east of Briey.
Alternating traffic scheme (30 Dec 91).
D946 Etreux, north of Guise. Resurfacing. Alternating traffic scheme. Traffic signals (7 Feb 92).

Austria

A8 Pichl to Wels motorway fork (30 April 92).
A12 Near Innsbruck Ost junction (UFN).
A25 Wels motorway fork to Wels Nord (30 May 92).

Belgium

E42 Lambusart, North East of Charleroi.
Bridge construction works. Lane closures (end Dec 91).

Germany

A6 Weinsberg motorway crossroads to Bretzfeld, north east of Heilbronn (15 Mar 92).
A7 Kassel Ost to Lutterberg (Apr 92).
A8 Karlsruhe to Karlsbad (31 Dec 91).
A8 Stuttgart Flughafen to Wendlingen (2 Mar 92).
A8 Pforzheim west to Prorzheim Ost, south east of Karlsruhe (30 Apr 92).
A15 Boblitz to Cottbus sud junction (30 Jun 92).
A30 Bunde-Ennigloh to Bunde-Hiddenhausen, north of Bielefeld (27 May 92)
A656 Heidelberg motorway crossroads to Heidelberg (10 Oct 92).

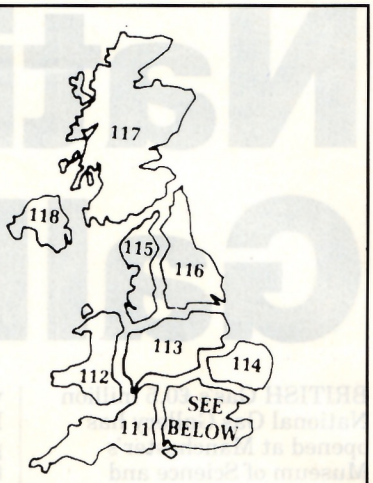
Netherlands

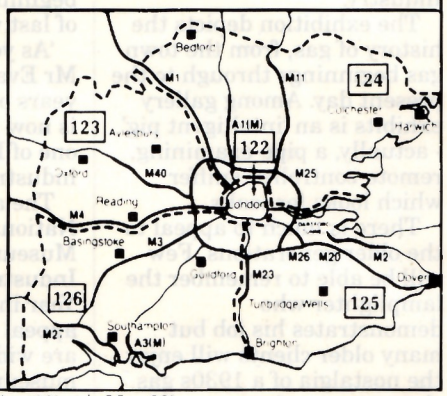
A15 Geldermalsen to Echteld, north east of Gorinchem (UFN).

Switzerland

Lowenberg to Murten, west of Bern. Alternating traffic scheme. Traffic signals (20 Dec 91).

For the latest information, call AA Roadwatch on 0836 401, followed by:
110 for motorways across Britain
127 for M25
118 for Northern Ireland
117 for Scotland
116 for north-east England
115 for north-west England
114 for East Anglia
113 for Midlands
112 for Wales
111 for West Country
The south-east of England is divided up as follows:
126 for area between M4 and M23
125 for area between M23 and Dartford Tunnel
124 for area between Dartford Tunnel and M1
123 for north-west Home Counties
122 for Central London
(See map, right, UK troublespots, below)
Calls are charged at 36p per minute off peak and 48p at other times.





UK motorway & 'A' roadworks

For the week December 16-23

LONDON/SOUTH EAST

M20 Kent: Contraflow between J5 and J8 (Maidstone West/Hollingbourne)
M20 Kent: Restrictions between J3 and 4 (M26/A228 Rochester) from 0900 to 1600. between J2 and J3 (Rochester/Chatham).
M27 Hampshire: Outside lane closed both ways between junctions 7 and 8 (Hedge End/Southampton). 0930 to 1600.
A40M London: Lane closures both ways on Westway, White City.
A406 London: Contraflow on North Circular road between Staples Corner and Neasden Underpass.
A23 Sussex: Reduced to one lane in both directions between Bolney and Hickstead.
A3 Hampshire: Contraflows south of Petersfield and between Liphook and Hindhead.

MIDLANDS/EAST ANGLIA

M5 Hereford/Worcester: Northbound entry and exit slip roads closed at J6 (Worcester North). Diversions M50 Hereford/Worcester: Contraflow at J3 (Jays Green).
A6 Leicestershire. Sewer work on London Road, Leicester.
A426 Warwickshire: Contraflow on Leicester Road, Rugby.
A60 Nottinghamshire: Mansfield Road, Warsop, closed between railway bridge and town centre. Diversions in operation.
A11 Norfolk: Contraflow at Cringleford between Norwich and Wymondham.
A1308 Suffolk: Restrictions in both directions at Stowmarket.
A47 Cambridgeshire: Resurfacing work between Station Road and Pidgeons Farm, Thorney.

WALES/WEST

M5 Devon: One lane closed southbound between junction 27 and 28 (Tiverton/Cullompton).
M4 West Glamorgan: Restrictions both ways J39-J41 (Groes/Pentyla).
A48 West Glamorgan: Reconstruction work of Earlswood roundabout.
A55 Gwynedd: Temporary lights at the Penyclip Tunnel between Penmaenmawr and Llanfairfechan.
A5 Gwynedd: Temporary lights on London Road, Holyhead (work suspended 23 Dec to 5 Jan).
A4046 Gwent: Marine Street, Cwm. Temporary lights.
A4 Avon: Restrictions on Hotwell Road, Bristol.
A358 Somerset: Temporary lights at Ashill near Taunton.
A380 Devon: Major roadworks at the Fiddlers Elbow, between Newton Abbot and Exeter.
A35 Dorset: Two sets of temporary lights on the Yellowham Hill.

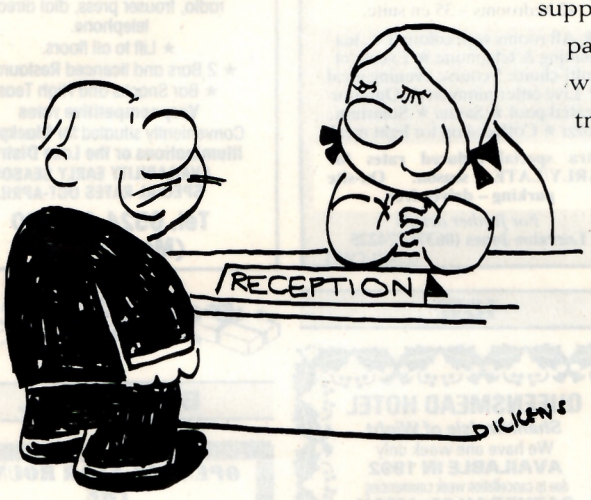
NORTH

M56 Greater Manchester: Restrictions on the airport link road.
M61 Greater Manchester: Lane closures on the southbound exit slip road at J2.
M62 Greater Manchester: Lane closures on the westbound exit slip road at J14.
M56 Cheshire: Contraflow J10 and J11 (Northwich/Preston Brook).
M6 Cumbria: Contraflow between J40 and J42 (Clifton/Carlisle).
M67 Greater Manchester: Various lane closures from the Denton interchange to J1 (Ashton).
A1M County Durham: Contraflow at Chester le Street with speed restrictions.
A523 Cheshire: Temporary lights on Mill Lane, Macclesfield, also Windmill Street is closed at the junction with Mill Lane with long delays expected.
A666 Greater Manchester: Single lane traffic each way on Blackburn Road, Astley Bridge.
A56 Greater Manchester: Chester Road, Old Trafford. Restrictions junction with City Road.
A59 North Northshire: Temporary lights on Harrogate to Skipton Road at Bolton Abbey Bridge.
A616 South Yorkshire: Mosbrough Road, Sheffield closed near the High Street.
A6 Derbyshire: Contraflow on Taddington bypass.

SCOTLAND

M8 Strathclyde: Junctions 13-14 lane closures both ways.
M8 Strathclyde: Outside lane closed westbound at junction 29.
M8 Strathclyde: Lane closures both ways between junctions 5 & 6 Shotts/Newhouse).
M73 Strathclyde: Lane closures on link road between the A80 and the Johnston Road Bridge.
A698 Borders: Temporary lights by Edenmouth Bridge, near Kelso.
A74 Strathclyde: Various lane closures at Elvanfoot.
A734 Strathclyde: Abington Road, Lanark closed northbound junction with A74. Diversion.
A75 Dumfries/Galloway: Temporary lights east of Newton Cross, Blackcraig.

Friendly by name. Friendly by nature.



They've been to the ruined castle where Henry VIII's supposed to have stayed. They've seen the lions at the safari park. They've done the coast and toured the dales. Now you want something a bit different to tempt your group travellers.

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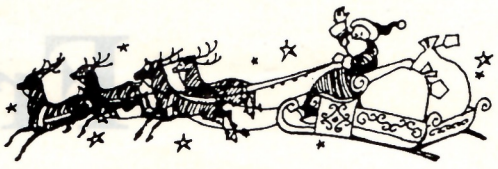

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Copy deadline: 1pm Tuesday for Thursday's issue. **Cancellation deadline:** 11am Tuesday.

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23677/BB)

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2 PEDIGREE AEC vehicles, JPA 171K, ex-London Country RP, AEC Reliance, 49 seats, tested 06/92, offers around **£2,000 + VAT.** YCE 675L, ex-Burwell and District, AEC Reliance Plaxton, 53 seater, retrimmed, tested 11/92, offers around **£2,500 + VAT. Tel. Buffalo Travel, Flitwick, Bedford MK45 5BW. Tel. (0525) 712132.** (23713/AEC)

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1977 BEDFORD YMT, 53 retrimmed seats, new MoT, very good condition, owner driven. **£4,250 + VAT ono. Tel. Charnock Coaches, Sheffield and Hope Valley on 0433 621338.** (23477/BE)

1977 YMT SUPREME, 53 seater, MoT Oct '92, FTA inspected, tidy motor, air door. **£3,500 or offers. Tel. 0536 202660.** (23699/BE)

C.V.E.

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(23702/CVE)

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DAF

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53 recliners + courier, drinks machine, quick sale.

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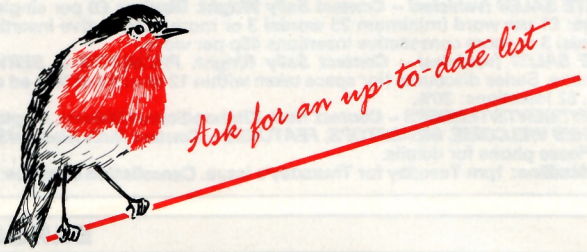

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The County Council is seeking tenders from bus and coach operators to enter into service subsidy agreements to provide education transport services in Chelmsford area(s). Operators wishing to receive further information and tender documents should contact immediately: County Planner, Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1LF or telephone Chelmsford (0245) 492211 Extension 51591.

Completed tender documents must be received by 1200 hours (noon) on 7th January 1992. Tenders received after this date will not be considered.

R W Adcock
Chief Executive and Clerk

17 December 1991

(23674/TE)

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL
INVITATION TO TENDER FOR EDUCATION TRANSPORT

The County Council is seeking tenders from bus and coach operators to enter into service subsidy agreements to provide bus services in Braintree, Colchester, Chelmsford, Ongar & Uttlesford area(s). Operators wishing to receive further information and tender documents should contact immediately: County Planner, Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1LF or telephone Chelmsford (0245) 492211 Extension 51591. Operators on the tender list should have received documents by 20th December 1991. Please telephone the above number if they have not been received by that date.

Completed tender documents must be received by 1200 hours (noon) on 7th January 1992. Tenders received after this date will not be considered.

R W Adcock
Chief Executive and Clerk

17 December 1991

(23673/TE)

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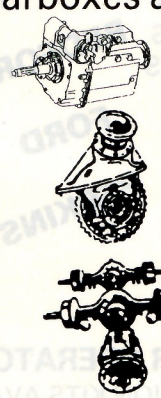

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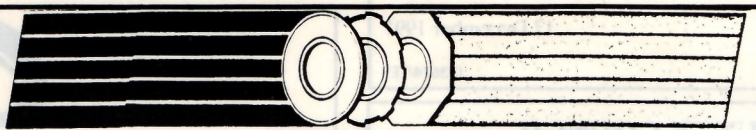

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wish you ALL a very *Merry Christmas!!*

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AFTER HOURS & WEEKENDS CONTACT

John Dover **084421 7994 or 0836 280951**

1990 (G) VAN HOOL A600 SERVICE BUS. 52 seats, 19 standees, Cummins L10B 210hp engine, ZF auto gearbox, ex demonstration model, warranty available.

1989 (G) LAG PANORAMIC. 49 reclining seats, courier seat, centre toilet, cont door and steps, double glazed, curtains, bunk, 1 screen video, water boiler, fridge, Telma, radio, PA, tape, additional fuel tank, alarm. Finished in blue.

1988 (E) DAF SB2305 DHS CAETANO ALGARVE. 49/53 seats, demountable toilet, 2 x TV, video, hot water boiler, courier seat, driver's bunk, carpets and curtains.

1988 (F) VOLVO B10M CAETANO ALGARVE. 49/53 seats, centre toilet, TV/video, courier seat, double glazing and curtains.

1987 (D) SCANIA K112/PLAXTON 3500. Telma retarder, 51/55 demountable, centre toilet, video system, water boiler, double glazed with curtains, steps and Cont. door.

1986 (C) LAG PANORAMIC INTEGRAL KITCHEN COACH, 46 reclining seats, with rear servery, full air conditioning, centre toilet, continental step, water boiler, fridge plus usual executive features.

1985 (C) DAF MB 230 LAG GALAXY. High floor, 49/53 demountable, sunken rear toilet, TV & video, boiler, bunk, double glazed, Webasto, carpets & curtains, retrimmed throughout in brown. Finished in white.

1983 (PP) VOLVO B10M JONCKHEERE P50 EXEC, Telma, 49 seats, rear sunken toilet & cont door, TV/video, coffee machine, cool box, bunk, Webasto, cellular telephone.

1983 (Y) BEDFORD YMPS PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200, 35 fixed seats, tinted double glazing, radio PA & tape, power door, side lockers.

1980 (V) DAF PLAXTON SUPREME 4. 57 seater, radio, PA, tape, side lockers, power door.

1976 (P) LEYLAND LEOPARD/DUPLE DOMINANT. 51 seats, semi-auto, power door.

VANHOOL

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VANHOOL

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- MB230 mid engine with Alizee 'H' and Super High coachwork.
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